ENGLISH

The Reason is You

Guapoduo Fanzine

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Hide and Seek

Written by Max

The castle swam for a few seconds as Roier blinked away the effects from the warp. No matter how many times he used them, he still got a bit sick.

"Alright, bath time!"

Richarlyson was already trying to squirm free from Cellbit's arms using every kind of excuse under the sun.

"But I'm too tired!"

"It'll be a fast one."

"But I'm too hungry!"

"You can have a snack while washing up."

Roier took a second to steady himself, putting a hand on Cellbit's shoulder and letting it guide him. "If you have a quick bath, maybe we'll have enough time to wash your pai, too, the stinky bastard."

Cellbit smiled yet opened his mouth to protest, but Richas beat him to the punch with a giggle, at least partially forgetting about his mission to wriggle free.

They made it to the castle's grand entrance. The tinny-sounding speakers still shouted a *"¡Bienvenidos!"* and a *"Boas vindas!",* but the doors did not swing open.

"That's weird…" Cellbit stepped back and retriggered the speakers again. The doors still didn't move.

"Can you hold him for a second?" He handed Richas to Roier as he bent down to take a closer look at the doors.

The sudden weight threw Roier off-balance, and one second was all Richas needed to twist free from Roier's arms.

Before Roier could say something, Richas dashed to the castle's wall, pushed a few loose bricks aside, blew a raspberry behind him, and then he was gone, disappearing into the wall like an ant in the grass.

It was so sudden that Roier couldn't help but laugh. He knew Richas hated baths, but really? He hated them that much?

At least he was in the castle. Somewhere.

Cellbit was still too focused on fixing the doors but did manage to get one to partially swing open. "Ahh, I'll have to look at it tomorrow. This is the best I can do."

"Look at my handyman. Able to fix things in no time." Roier wrapped his arms around Cellbit's shoulders.

"Yeah, and now, we can finally give…" Cellbit trailed off as he realized that both of Roier's hands were empty. "Where's Richas?"

"He didn't want to take a bath; he left."

Cellbit looked around, even poking his head into the castle's entryway. "Richarlyson? Where did he go?"

Roier shrugged, pulling Cellbit closer to him. "He didn't want to take a bath, Gatinho."

"But his Egg Quests!"

"He'll still get a bath, but he's being considerate, letting the water heat up first, you know." He set his chin on Cellbit's shoulder. "Maybe we can even squeeze in a game of Hide and Seek before then."

Cellbit squinted in confusion before he caught on and turned to Roier with a smile. "Yeah, okay, a game between us or a game with Richas?"

"Why not both? Whoever finds Richarlyson first wins."

"And the loser…?"

"You lose, Gatinho, you have to go to bed at the same time I do. No more late nights for a week."

"Ahh, okay, okay." Cellbit pressed a kiss to the back of one of Roier's hands. "But if I win, you have to help me organize my desk."

Just the mental image of Cellbit's ripped-out notes and scribbled drawings thrown all over his office was enough to make Roier shudder. But that was a monster he wasn't going to face since he was going to find Richas first. "Mmm, bueno." Roier pulled his arms away to stretch one of his legs. "I hope you've got your running shoes on, because you're going to lose!"

"No way! No one knows my son better than I do!" Cellbit took off into the castle, disappearing around a corner with a shit-eating grin.

Roier just chuckled and put his hands in his pockets. This was going to be easy.

A few more steps and he was there, the most obvious place for Richas to be. Roier slowly pushed the door open.

"Richarlyson?"

The room itself was a mess. Rumpled sheets were pushed into a pile on the corner of the bed. There were painted canvases propped up next to it to dry. Toys and sports equipment were strewn all over the floor. And there was no sign of the kid anywhere.

That was until Roier saw a bit of red peeking out from under the sheets.

He couldn't contain his smile.

"Oh, so tired already, Richarlyson?" He crept forward, taking care to not step on any toys, and slowly reached out to grab the sheets. "You don't want to stay up a little longer?" Roier snatched the sheets and ripped them away, only to reveal another one of Richas's stuffed animals, the exact same shade as the hat he liked to wear.

The kid was good.

Roier slowly put the sheets back the way he found them. Where else would

that kid be?

He was just about to head back down when he heard someone else coming up the stairs. Too heavy of footsteps to be Richas.

Roier ran behind the door frame as Cellbit came round the corner.

"Richarlyson… Where are you?"

As much as Roier wanted to jump out and scare the shit out of Cellbit, it would be better to not let Cellbit know he was there. Force him to waste time and search an empty room. And so he slipped out the door and silently made his way down the stairs, sticking his tongue out at Cellbit's back.

"Awwww, Richinha… What?!"

Roier had to hold a hand over his mouth to keep in his laughter as he heard Cellbit fall for the same trick he did.

He'd take any extra time he could get, but if he stuck around a few seconds longer just to hear Cellbit yell in frustration, who could blame him?

The next best spot had to have been the entity rooms. There were so many nooks and crannies and places to hide! Of course Richas would be there. The place practically oozed fun.

Roier stepped onto one of the pentagram's corners and gracefully fell into the first room.

"Richas?"

The dogs crowded around him, sniffing and licking at his hands excitedly, as the chained demon on the throne grunted a greeting. Roier poked his head around the pillars and bricks, the dogs following him. He even checked behind the chained demon itself, much to its disgruntlement. Richas was not here. His yellow and green shirt would give him away instantly with all this red. Besides, the dogs wouldn't have left the kid alone, too excited to have someone to play with.

The Death Room didn't fare any better. Richarlyson was not behind any of the trees nor in the strangely-shadowed corners. The demon in this room was too busy staring transfixed at the spiraling ceiling, but Roier could have guessed it didn't know where Richas was, either.

The Knowledge Room was equally empty. Although, if Roier was the one who was hiding, this would definitely be the spot with the comfy couches and golden waterfalls.

And by the time he was done searching through the Chaos Room's pits and hidey-holes, he had so many bacteriophages stuck to him that he swore he could still feel them crawling around in his hair. Richas was a handful, but even he had a limit.

The entity rooms were probably a bust. But just in case, Roier decided to check the final room anyway.

He stepped onto the last corner of the pentagram and fell into a room of mist and snapping jaws. This place always freaked him out more than the others. Whatever creatures Cellbit kept in here were quick to bite at his heels as he punched in the code to the security door.

"Ey, ¡cálmate!" Roier kicked them back and closed the door in their faces.

Now, just a good look around…

"Rahhh!"

"¡Ay, cabrón! Don't scare me like that!" Roier brought a hand to his heart.

Cellbit just laughed. "Well, stop following me!"

"Following you?! You're the one who's following me!"

Cellbit laughed again and reached for Roier to pull him close. "Maybe so, but I don't think it's a coincidence that we ended up in the same place."

Even with his view limited from the hug, he could see that Richas was not here. "What were you doing in here? Waiting to scare me?"

"No, no, Guapito. Not to scare you. That was just a bonus."

"Then what?"

"Just waiting for you." With that Cellbit started slowly spinning them around, as if they were slow-dancing to soft music.

"We're supposed to be searching for Richas, remember? Not looking for each other." Even though he sounded angry, Roier couldn't help but put a little more groove into the dance with each turn. This was pretty romantic, he had to admit.

"Well, since we've bumped into each other a few times now, that has to mean something, right?" There was something to Cellbit's voice, but Roier couldn't put a finger on what.

He laughed. "What are you talking about?"

"It means that despite trying our best, we end up following each other to the ends of the Earth." Cellbit planted a loud kiss to Roier's forehead.

That still didn't make sense but it was silly enough for Roier to confusedly laugh.

"It means that since the castle's only so big, we should team up and search together, Guapito."

"Then just say that, pendejo," Roier laughed for real this time, put his hand to Cellbit's chest and pushed him away.

Truly what a curse it was to be married to a sap like Cellbit.

He wouldn't change it for the world.

The only place neither of them had checked yet was the master bedroom. Cellbit immediately strode over to the balcony and threw open the doors. "Richas?"

Roier dropped to the floor to look under the bed. Despite being in the same place, it was still a competition, and Roier wasn't planning on losing anytime soon. "Where are you?"

But it didn't look like Richas was there either.

Just like Cellbit said, the castle was only so big. He had to be somewhere.

Roier peeked behind the armchair, then behind the chest, even inside the suit of armor. Nothing.

And to make matters worse, Cellbit followed close behind, checking the same spots Roier just did.

"You're not going to make him appear if you're the one to look."

"But he's my son. I know him the best."

"Yeah, obviously, since we're both in here with no son in sight."

"Hey, listen," Cellbit held up his hands, a sly grin on his face. "I haven't won, you haven't won. We're just proving that we're equally good parents. Maybe even the best."

Roier rolled his eyes and was just about to fire something back when he heard a soft giggle, coming somewhere behind him.

Cellbit didn't seem to hear it, pushing on with the conversation. "I mean, we're really giving Pac and Mike a run for their money."

Another giggle, a little bit louder this time. Behind the closed bathroom door.

Roier glanced at the door then back at Cellbit. He definitely heard that second one.

In a flash, Roier and Cellbit both charged for the door, Roier barely getting a hand on the knob and throwing the door open before the two crashed into the doorframe and fell on the floor in a heap.

There, peeking over the edge of the tub, was a bright pair of eyes.

"Ayyy, eager for a bath are we?"

"No! No!" Richas scrambled out of the tub and darted for the door.

Roier untangled himself from Cellbit just enough to catch Richas as he tried to make another escape. "The hide-and-seek champion! Just in time for bed!"

Cellbit looked between the two, a bit dumbfounded, but still smiled when he ruffled Richarlyson's hair. "No way he was already there! You guys planned that or something!"

"Or maybe I'm just a winner, Cellbo."

"Or I'm a good hider!"

"Or Richas is a good hider." Roier scooped Richas up and started carrying him back through the castle for bed. "We truly don't know. But the only thing I do know is that the other side of our bed will be warm tonight."

"Okay, fine." Cellbit followed behind them. "But it was my joke that led us to him in the first place! I should get something for that, right?!"

"Ahh, of course, how could I have forgotten?" Roier turned and kissed Cellbit's cheek. "How lucky I am that I'm married to such a comedian."

Cellbit shook his head yet smiled. "But the bath?"

"We can just try tomorrow, Gatinho, when everyone has fresh eyes and more free time."

"Yes!" Richas fist pumped as he scrambled to get ready for bed. "We can play again tomorrow!"

And true to his word, after a sound night's sleep next to his husband, they did have to search the castle again for Richarlyson, but found him soon enough to not only give him a bath but themselves as well from all of the splashing.

And after, if Roier helped Cellbit clean up his office, well, who was there to judge? Because maybe they both knew his son the best.

ERES MI CIELO, ERES MIS CONSUELOS

Written by shlooksnook

Cellbit glanced at the clock in his poorly-lit office. *2:53 AM*, it read, much to his dismay. He dragged a hand across his face and through his hair as he turned back toward his work, but now he was conscious of the clock. Its sound disrupted his entire train of thought; each tick, tick, tick was mocking him, reminding him of his predicament.

So yeah, it was another late night for Cellbit. But this time was different than normal. This time, he wasn't staying up with friends, or investigating the island, or catching up on work after putting Richarlyson to bed.

This time, there was no Richarlyson to put to bed.

All of the children had gone missing a little while before, a situation that was sadly not too far from the norm. But then a day went by, then two days, then a week, and there was still no trace of any of them.

Cellbit knew it'd be up to him. He was known for solving mysteries no one else could solve, for taking charge and putting together solutions in otherwise hopeless situations. He knew everyone would turn toward him to find all their missing kids.

It wasn't too big of a problem initially; Cellbit was, of his own accord, the first to dive head-on into hunting for traces of them. Any involvement from others began as inquiries to how his investigation was going, as leads dropped off on his desk or hand-delivered during the little free time the Brazilian allowed himself.

Then Cellbit made less and less breakthroughs. Days went by, then weeks, then a month, with no sign of any of the kids and a million different red herrings and dead ends. Questions about the investigation became more like pleads or demands, Cellbit was growing more tired by the day, and he'd rather not dwell on the state that it was pushing him to.

But Cellbit, naturally, was falling apart.

And everyone, naturally, kept looking to him anyway.

He was the only one clever enough to put together the pieces, or maybe the only one stupid enough to keep trying. Whatever the case, he had to stay lucid, for the kids' sake. For Richarlyson's sake.

Out of the corner of his eye, Cellbit spotted the family photo he kept framed on his desk. It was the only personal item he kept in the office. Among piles and piles of his notes in the plain room, it kept him grounded.

In the photo, Cellbit smirked lightly, his right hand intertwined with the left hand of Roier, who flashed the camera a toothy smile. Bobby was held firmly in Roier's right arm, shooting a mischievous grin toward Richarlyson, who stood laughing in front of Cellbit. Jaiden smiled sweetly on the other side of Bobby, pointing toward the camera in a feeble attempt to get him to look there instead of his brother. Cellbit vividly remembered trying to wrangle the two rambunctious boys into the shot. At the time, he was about ready to give

up entirely, but he was thankful now that they had managed it.

He ran his thumb over Richarlyson's face, admiring his genuine happiness and innocence.

With a deep breath, he tore his gaze from his son's smile and looked back to a photo of him just days before his disappearance, covered in an immense amount of grime. Then a photo of his tattered soccer jersey, hastily left behind at his bed, the only sign he was even gone. None of it made any sense to him.

The clock's ticking jammed its way into his thoughts again, growing louder and louder. Each second was a second Richas could be suffering, wasted on Cellbit's self-absorbed thoughts when he could've spent it searching or interrogating a Federation worker or… or…

He looked up at the clock. *2:59 AM*. He knocked on his head a few times, muttered a few words to himself, and gulped his coffee from the plain mug next to all those horrible photos.

In his tired state, though, it was hard to concentrate. He'd already tried searching everywhere. He'd already tried interrogating workers. He'd already tried everything. Cellbit propped his head up on one hand, his elbow resting on the desk. The clock continued ticking, reminding him of the time he was still wasting.

He was certain the Federation was responsible for the children's sudden deterioration and disappearance, or at least that they knew what had caused it. Maybe diplomacy wouldn't be effective. Interrogating Cucurucho only ever led to intentionally vague responses that hid crucial secrets.

Maybe more force would better prove his point…

Each and every Federation worker deserved to burn for risking everyone's children's safety. Entirely unfocused on his useless rambles or research now, Cellbit imagined himself pinning one of them to the ground, jamming a knife into the blank slate where a face should be, slitting its throat and watching the blood drip from the wound and stain the ground. He imagined tearing off pieces of flesh and digging in. He wondered if the taste would be any different to normal human flesh.

The clock struck three and chimed loudly, pulling him from his delirium. No, despite his deteriorating mental state, he wasn't that person anymore.

Cell had - *Cellbit* had changed.

He picked up a random image of a cryptic code and squinted at it. Anything to get his mind off of that. The text seemed to overlap onto itself, all the letters blurring together.

"Que porra isso, mano?!" He finally shouted after a few seconds of blank staring. He threw the photo down and groaned.

Everyone's kids were probably all dead already, because the so-called greatest detective on the island couldn't figure it out in time.

Cellbit's head sunk deeper into the arm he was using to hold its weight.

Then, a knock on the door.

It was a gentle knock, but it still startled him, especially at this hour. Who…

"Gatinho? Are you in there?"

Roier. Of course. Cellbit's alarm instantly melted to guilt.

"Uh, yeah." Cellbit rubbed at a growing headache in the center of his forehead. He waited a few seconds for his breathing to slow to a more normal level before continuing, "Come in, *guapito."*

The Brazilian didn't look up when he heard the door creak open, nor when his husband's soft footsteps tapped across the room and ended right behind where he was sitting. The two remained in silence for a few moments, the atmosphere much calmer merely from Roier's presence. He was the one light Cellbit had left, the last remnant of the family he'd done so much to be a part of before the rest of it was so brutally torn from him.

Roier was the one to finally speak. His words were heavy with fatigue and a hint of annoyance. "It's three in the morning, man. I've been waiting for you."

Cellbit blinked hard. "Waiting for me?"

"¡Si, pendejo! Yes!" Cellbit leaned back in his chair and stared into Roier's angry (and upside-down) expression. "I fell asleep waiting, while you were down here screaming and…"

Roier trailed off, his voice losing its exaggerated angry edge as he looked downward. His gaze softened when it landed on the collection of evidence scattered across Cellbit's desk.

Cellbit closed his eyes and let himself lean backward into Roier's torso. He was silent, apart from a heavy breath that he let out through slightly parted lips.

Equally wordlessly, Roier caught his head in his hands and gently combed his fingers through his hair. Due to the lack of maintenance Cellbit had given it recently, he kept running into snags, each tug serving as a reminder of how out of sorts he was and how much pain it was causing him. But he never swatted Roier's hand away. It wasn't his fault that the kind gesture turned to something more malicious due to Cellbit's own negligence.

After about the nine-hundredth knot in his hair, though, Roier gave up. *"Ay, culero,* when was the last time you washed your hair? When was the last time you even combed it?"

Cellbit scoffed and opened his eyes. Roier's look of annoyance was replaced by one of concern. His lips were pursed, and his eyebrows furrowed. Two brown eyes, plus the extra set of indistinct spider eyes below them, stared down at the Brazilian, full of worry.

"I've just been really busy. Everyone's counting on this, and it's going nowhere." Cellbit lifted an arm to gesture vaguely at his work, then let it fall limp by his side in defeat. "But I fucking wash my hair, *guapito.* Don't worry."

"Oh, *do you?*" Roier sing-songed playfully, yet the worry didn't leave his face. "When was the last time then?"

After a few beats of silence, Cellbit sat back up and swiveled his chair to face Roier instead. He looked meaningfully into his eyes and heaved a sigh. "I don't know."

Roier's face lightened to a teasing grin. "I knew it, Cellbo! *Hueles a culo;* you smell like ass. I can't have a husband who smells like ass!"

At Cellbit's halfhearted chuckle, Roier's face fell. He momentarily disappeared to pull up another chair to his left, then rested his head on Cellbit's shoulder.

"I miss them too," Roier simply stated and took the Brazilian's hand. "But, staying awake until you pass out and skipping baths until you stink is not gonna help anyone."

"I just feel like I'm missing something, like it has to be close to coming together." Cellbit leaned into Roier as well. "And everyone's counting on me to find them."

Roier rubbed his thumb in circles over the back of the Brazilian's hand, over several old cuts that made up only a tiny fraction of all the scars littered across his entire body. Cellbit had always hated how his scars looked, but his husband, his whole family, had never once judged them for him. They barely even mentioned them, like they were a feature as simple as his blue eyes or his greasy, brown hair with a white streak that he only kept because Roier liked it.

Cellbit continued, "I just miss having a family. I miss having a son to hang out with every day and how nice it was with all the kids around. I worked so hard to improve myself and as soon as I finally found happiness, they ripped it from me."

Indeed, what a priceless little family he had had. He missed Richarlyson, and he missed the light of the island that had left along with all the children.

Roier hummed in understanding and took a deep breath. Cellbit could feel his husband's hands shaking slightly.

"When Jaiden and I lost Bobby," Roier started, taking a pause to compose himself after his voice broke slightly, "It was the worst I've ever felt in my life, Cellbo, the *worst*."

Cellbit said nothing but pulled his left hand out to wrap it around Roier's shoulder instead.

"I felt like it was my fault that I lost everything. But then you were there for me. We got through it together. So I think we can get through anything together, eh?"

Cellbit smiled sadly and did his best to put on a cheerful tone, though it was unconvincing at best. "Yeah, maybe."

Roier scoffed and shifted to wipe away a silent tear. "C'mon, man, you can do better than that."

"It's just- I-I can't…" Cellbit trailed off, fighting back tears of his own. "I don't know if I can find them. I feel like I failed."

"Gatinho…" Roier reassured. "Nobody thinks you failed. Do you see anybody else figuring out half the shit you are? I know you'll find them soon."

"Which is why I have t-"

"Shhhhhhhh, *callate, pendejo.* We'll think about it again tomorrow. Together." Roier carefully stood up. "For now, I'm so tired, can we please go to sleep? I'll give you the biggest kiss if we do."

Roier puckered his lips and started making egregiously sloppy kissing noises at Cellbit, tugging on his arm to get him out of his office chair. Cellbit laughed at his antics but heard the ticking of the clock underneath the ruckus and was again reminded of all the time he was wasting.

"I don't know, Roier…"

"I'll drag you the whole way to bed if I have to."

Cellbit raised an eyebrow and smirked. "You drag me?"

"No mames, Cellbit, did you forget who the strong one is? You don't even go to sleep or wash your stinky body anymore!" He jokingly flexed his biceps and wiggled his eyebrows.

"Shut the fuck up!" The Brazilian let a chuckle escape with the exclamation. "I do wash m- *Ai!"*

Cellbit was cut off by two arms seizing his upper torso. He tried to fight them, but they were incredibly strong, and Cellbit was incredibly exhausted. It was easy to forget how strong Roier was when he was such a goofball on the surface, but Cellbit knew better than anyone that he shouldn't be underestimated. Plus, deep down, he knew his husband was right, so he was only jokingly fighting against him anyway.

"Okay, stop! Let go, *guapito!"* Cellbit giggled while he, as promised, literally dragged him kicking and screaming out of his chair and through the doorway.

"You left me no choice, *gatinho,"* he replied. "So you can get up and walk now, or we'll just go like this if that's what you want."

Cellbit considered it. He could take a much needed break, let himself fall onto a comfortable mattress alongside his husband, his everything, the one person left who could dissolve his worries, who would be at his side even at his darkest

Or he could try and stay here, but he didn't doubt that Roier could and would drag his ass all the way back to their bedroom anyway.

"Ta maluco." Cellbit gave in and stood up. He could set aside his work, at least just for the night. "Let's go to bed."

Cellbit realized exactly how exhausted he was the second his head hit the pillow. He hadn't even bothered to change out of his clothes before he practically fell into bed. He sunk on his back into the soft mattress and basked in the warmth trapped by the covers around him.

Roier climbed into bed after him and rolled onto his side. His warm face rested on Cellbit's chest, and Cellbit, content and cozy, shut his eyes. One arm wrapped around Roier's shoulder, he felt okay again.

Maybe this situation wouldn't get any better until the day Richarlyson and all the children were found, but it didn't all have to be up to Cellbit to pick up the pieces. He had his family, his friends, the Order, Roier. Roier would stay by his side no matter what, just like he'd stay by Roier. They were inseparable, always there to take care of each other and catch each other if they fell.

"Te amo, guapito," Cellbit murmured, his words slurred as he drifted closer and closer to sleep.

"Te amo también, gatinho," Roier mumbled in response.

Next to Roier, all the pressure on Cellbit faded away. For now, it was just them, ready to face the world, find their son, and mow down anyone or anything that dared stand in the way of making their family whole again.

NUESTRO AMORES COMO LAS ORQUÍDEAS

Written by Nonny_Mo, translated by Yuu Chida

He breathed in, lost in his own thoughts, letting the flowers' aroma guide his mind to somewhere more tranquil. He checked the reddish sleeves of his white suit, the red jewels and pearls sewn into the fabric seeming so delicate under the care of his hands that were brutally affected by the not-so-gentle

times in his life, covered by fingerless gloves, white and thin. It was strange being so nervous, after all, he'd married the love of his life before, so the second time should bring him less jitters and uncertain inner mutters, but that wasn't how it worked and he understood that well.

To some, marrying once to your beloved person was a miracle, an explosion of bliss to be kept in your memories with everlasting care. Marrying your soulmate was ten times more impactful, like finding a needle in a haystack; a miracle capable of leaving an eternal mark in your heart. Cellbit found himself in the rarest position in the world, in which he had not only married his soulmate, but would marry it once again.

Pulling the delicate fabric, he observed through the flowery, gradient lace his new tattoo done a few days prior. It was a spider with the design of a flower in its body and legs, tied by a blue ribbon that became red on its ends, surrounded by the branches of flowers that, now, guided his love, his marriage. Dahlias, orchids, and, obviously, amaranths, the latter being released by the arachnid as if it webbed by it. A tattoo representing Roier, his ardent soul, more enchanting than the garden of Eden itself, capable of treacherous strikes to his enemies and the warmest cherishing to his family.

He softly sniffed, swallowing his tears so they wouldn't ruin his makeup - Bagi and Baghera would be upset if he let their work of art drip down his face after hours taking care of his appearance with the help of Felps and Pac. Lately, one could say he was more emotional than ever before, but taking in consideration the circumstances, that was a good sign. Sometimes it was still odd finding himself so enveloped by love, care, and loyalty, seeing as, during his whole life, he'd only received the total opposite. Days of war only created more days of war, so he couldn't explain how he reached the days of glory.

The Purgatory should've destroyed his life - literally -, leaving him with nothing nor no one to take him in after the end of the world. The Goddess of Fate was an unpredictable being, however, and, alongside the Goddesses of Love, they twisted his visions of a lonely, depressive future into something full of tenderness. He had his son back, met again with his family formed by the horrors of the apocalypse, reunited with his family from before any memory of his childhood and, most importantly, met again with his husband, who still loved him and wanted to be by his side above all else.

It was surreal.

Of course, his relationship completely changed after returning from the god forsaken island. He had to save his husband from a kidnapping, both terribly traumatized to the point of having many nightmares and new triggers from simple contacts. They had to walk on eggshells until they could feel comfortable in their relationship once again; until they could sincerely talk about what afflicted them during the weeks away from one another.

After that talk of the deepest sincerity spilled in between tears and agony, his relationship got stronger than he ever imagined. Cellbit never considered being forgiven, in receiving so much love and trust after having abandoned Roier to suffer alone - *if the man in question knew about this train of thought, Cellbit would receive one hell of a hit from the mighty flip-flops* -, to the point that, every day, he thanked the Goddesses of Love for blessing his relationship. They must've really liked the both of them to endure the whole emotional rollercoaster from the last weeks.

Both were quite intense, he had to admit. They wanted to get married as quickly as possible, but life did not care one bit for their plans since, after the touching vow renewal proposal made by Roier to Cellbit with their recovered old rings, an announcement for a change of islands was made. In the blink of an eye, before they could even make sense of what was happening, before they could even say goodbye to the old memories kept in their homes, all the islanders woke up in a completely new place. With nothing to their names.

He almost tore apart the first rabbit he saw when he thought they had taken their wedding rings away.

They were still well worn in their fingers, so there was no need to kill any of them. *Yet.*

Ah, right, the rabbits.

He would keep himself ignorant about the new commanding of this new island for now, he had more pressing matters at the moment. After all, he and his family no longer had a home, nor materials to build one, and much less to build a wedding. An almost total restart.

The Federation was literally the reason why he gathered more and more gray hairs; peace was truly temporary with them.

In any case, his plans were affected by a long pause. The focus became to

rebuild their lives before they could think of establishing the new foundation of his relationship. It could've been something tiring, bland, stressful, but it was the contrary. The both of them, alongside their children and, occasionally, their friends, spent days exploring the new lands together, days building their new houses, messing around, making fun of each other and exchanging gentle touches in the middle of decorating the rooms.

They found the perfect place to raise their new home, getting shocked - positively - when finding out they were close to some of their battle mates from the misadventures in the hands of the vile entity from the red island. This time, they left behind the plans of their castles, building a beautiful mansion inspired by the element of Death - something that was very appreciated by Philza and his crows -, with a forest of trees with black trunks and white leaves planted in the surroundings along their collection of beloved flowers, with the bonus of a few of darker shades to match the local aesthetics.

With the house built and properly decorated, it was the moment to go back to the previous plan; it was to get married.

Once again, the plans for building the wedding spot were made by their children and friends, leaving the husbands to plan the other parts of their special day. Bureaucratically, the rabbits were not against it, nor did they try to stop it or cause any problems to the future huge event of the new island - great; it was for their own good. Not even the white bear came to show its sewn smile followed by its endless questions.

If it had shown up, Cellbit would not even try to control himself from laying down all his hatred upon the disgusting creature that dared to permanently hurt his guapito.

Again, they kept the clothes they would wear a secret from each other, just like the first time, wanting to be astonished by surprise at the altar. Another thing that wasn't said was who would be waiting and who would walk the aisle when the ceremony started, but, in a silent agreement, they already knew their positions without needing to establish a plan.

And this all took to the current moment, with Cellbit at the altar wearing a delicate white suit, with reddish lacing at its ends, pearls and red jewels in its surroundings, sewn in a subtle way throughout the entire fabric and more apparent on the arms and clavicles. His hair, longer than last time, had one

half of it tied in a small ponytail as the other cascaded in well-made waves into his shoulders, emphasizing his red earrings.

Everything in the gazebo was perfect, built upon a gorgeous garden of flowers, with vines from the aforementioned wrapping around the carefully sculpted pillars. The guests held their favorite flowers while sitting on the white benches and letting the grass touch their shoes. The cherry trees around allowed the breeze to take their petals, more enchanting than any rain of rice, forming a beautiful natural floor covered by the shades of pink entwining with the greens.

"Hey, egghead, calm down," Bagi's characteristic feminine voice called out his attention, making him turn to find the blueish-green eyes of his twin, "here," she offered the bouquet of colorful dahlias with white orchids, which the man took into his hands with care. "Now, breathe, everything's alright, okay? The ceremony's about to start," she gently smiled, her eyes slightly shutting, letting the held back tears be reflected under the sunlight.

When he asked her to be one of his groomsmaids, he did not expect the river of tears and the strong hug he received. It had been a hard decision, maybe somewhat impulsive, but it was totally theirs. It just felt right. The tears shed at that moment were something hidden under lock and keys, something only kept between the two. They may not be the same siblings they once were, but they could still be siblings, in a way that was different but not any less special. Little by little.

He breathed in for the gazillionth time, seeing the blonde go to her position next to Baghera, with Pomme and Empanada in front of them with little bouquets and huge smiles. Observing his surroundings, he could see how all the guests seemed happy, excited and emotional, and that made something good warm up his chest in comfort. Last time, his wedding was a celebration with the whole island. Now, it was more intimate, with his closest friends and family members. It was still big, more than anything the ex-prisoner could've ever imagined, but still, it was something only for his circle. It was perfect this way.

The melody started to echo, the tranquil violins with the chords of the guitar and the plucking of the harp. Richarlyson and Pepito climbed down the stairs hand-to-hand, with baskets of flowers swinging to spread the amaranth petals through the red carpet, stopping next to Roier's parents on the other

side of the altar - and yes, he had to hold back tears after seeing them wear Bobby's favorite flowers on their suits. From the top of the staircase, his husband appeared, wearing a suit of a blue so dark it could appear black, with the hair carefully brushed behind his headband, with his beautiful bouquet of amaranths and orchids in hands.

Everyone got up to admire the Mexican go down the steps and walk calmly through the carpet, the thin dark blue fabric attached to his shoulders like a veil fluttered in the wind, the small stones reflecting small rainbows. When he stopped in front of the Brazilian, containing all his emotion as he admired him like the most magnificent flower he'd ever seen, it was difficult for the other to contain himself as well.

The eyebags covered by light makeup, the well trimmed stubble, a blue eyeliner shaping the reddish-brown eyes and a subtle red lip gloss, not to mention the pink on his cheeks that seemed far too natural to be makeup. He was stunning, the definition of beauty and perfection itself. Someone carefully crafted by the hands of the deities, placed on Earth to bless those who would become worthy of his presence and care.

Cellbit certainly felt privileged to be deserving of having Roier in his life. It didn't matter how much he doubted it all, how much he thought the other would be better off without him, after the thing recorded in the tapes before his husband's kidnapping, he knew that doubting was meaningless.

Roier needed him to survive, to be happy. And Cellbit needed Roier just as much.

The officiant this time was Felps - he offered it himself; there were no reasons to deny the request of the omnipresent being -, reciting beautiful and complex words in profound analogies, nearing philosophy in its purest form with a touch of confusing moments, which made everyone laugh from his eccentricity. When he called for the rings, Pepito brought the cushion on his hand, being carried by Richas. Both husbands smiled wide at the sight of their little ones, one shedding tears from behind the classes with a big grin missing a front tooth, and the other trying to keep the façade of a tough one even if the treacherous teardrop and the fought-back smile were clear indications of his feelings.

Cellbit caressed the ring on his hand, the puzzle piece polished as if new,

currently accompanied by red paint on its corners. A memory, an emphasis on this new era of their lives together, the evolution of who they were and who they are in this relationship. Raising his gaze, he could see how his guapito did the same to the spider ring, painted in a gradient of white to blue until the stones around it.

When they could exchange rings and say their vows, the Brazilian started, taking the ring to put it on his husband's offered hand, leaving a light caress with the thumb on his calloused fingers.

"Roier, guapito, there are no words I could say that would be new to you, I think I've said so many times how much you matter to me, how much I love you," he swallowed his tears, staring deeply into those brown lands that had always brought peace to his violent seas. "Even when I don't say it, I make sure to show it the best way possible - sometimes it's not the best result, but I do what I can," he gave a low laugh, earning chuckles from the guests and an *"Apoco si, culero"* from the mexican. "You accepted me the way I am, seeing my most horrible sides and my most beautiful ones. For so long, I thought I would never have a love, not even a family, but you gave me both without even hesitating. Being away from you was the biggest torture in the world and I swear, I swear with all my heart, that I'll never do that again - only if you ask me to. I love you, I love you like the first time I saw you, like on our first date, like on our first wedding, and I'll keep loving you, today, tomorrow, dead or alive. I will love you forever."

He could hear the crying from the guests, influencing his own tears to fall, seeing them trail through the blushing cheeks of his husband who maintained a big smile on his face, making him fall even more in love.

It was Roier's turn to put the spider ring on the Brazilian's hand, holding it after placing a gentle kiss.

"Gatinho, I will love you forever, with all my heart, I swear it. You are my soulmate, and I never thought I would have one someday. Not only did you love me, you also gave me company, stayed with me in my worst and best moments," he looked at him through the tears, smiling gently. "When you weren't here, you still came to save me, you still were the reason for my laughter, even if it was all gray. You are my reason to live, the reason why I wake up, my reason to keep going and loving. Our love is as eternal as the amaranths, as colorful as the dahlias and as pure as the orchids. I love you,

today and forevermore."

Officialized in their second wedding, they exchanged a kiss that was calm and long, muffled by the voices of the other islanders, bathed by the graceful light of the setting sun. However, they could only hear the synchronized beat of their hearts connecting once more under the ruffling of petals, the blooming of flowers, under their love.

Nat_tkd

OCULTO

Written by Chini, translated Artfulstar

Cellbit glanced furtively around, his heart beating fast as the sounds of the night desert filled the air. Phil was busy discussing (more like trying) strategies and teaching the other red team members how to plant a crop, while they fooled around more than anything. And Slime, who hadn't let go of the Brazilian lately, seemed quite distracted by a fire, even though the blond knew he didn't have much time. Taking advantage of a moment of carelessness, he sneaked out of the base, keeping to the shadows of the dunes.

As he ran, his thoughts were fixed on Roier. The whole conversation in the brief meeting they'd had, and the message he'd received earlier still echoed in his mind: *"Secreto de Amor"*. The longing tightened his chest, and he knew risking everything for this meeting would be worth it. After a while of running through the desert, Cellbit reached the edge of the forest, the "green team territory", where the darkness of the trees offered a safer cover. The smell of damp earth and the rustle of leaves in the wind were a welcome relief from the aridity of where his team was.

Roier, on the other hand, was also moving carefully. He had to avoid the constant surveillance of the green team, always on the lookout for *any* suspicious movement, so keen to win… With light steps, he made his way through the dense forest, the branches rustling slightly as he passed. The full moon illuminated his path and the distant sound of the lake guided his steps, and he knew he was getting closer and closer to his destination and his love.

Finally, they met at the entrance to a cave, the moonlight reflecting softly on the nearby lake. Seeing Cellbit, Roier felt a wave of relief and happiness. Without hesitation, the Mexican practically threw himself at his husband, not that the Brazilian was too far behind, and they hugged each other tightly, feeling each other's presence after what, for them, had been so long apart. Their hearts beat in unison, a silent solace in the vastness of the night.

"Te extrañé, pendejo, te extrañé mucho... I missed you" Roier mumbled against Cellbit's shoulder, who only tightened his embrace in response. The

feel of Roier's body against his was a relief, tangible proof that they were there, together, despite everything. That they always would be.

After a moment, they separated enough to exchange a kiss. The touch of their lips was familiar and comforting, a promise of eternal love.

Breaths mingling, the warmth of each other in the cold night, the sensation of skin, lips, and hearts so close, beating together.

They touched foreheads, eye to eye, blue and brown. Cellbit ran the tips of his fingers lightly down his husband's back, smiling at the goosebumps he knew he was causing, and Roier slid his hands down the blond's face, his digits feeling the beard, the new scars.

"Cellbo…" The brunet called out, his voice soft, the other replying only with a 'hm', *"Hueles a culo."*

The Brazilian threw his head back, laughing with a lightness he hadn't felt for days, even though they had seen each other that same day, a little earlier, it had been so quick, so lacking in privacy...

"I missed you too, guapito." Cellbit replied, his voice choked, his eyes glistening with unshed tears. He held Roier's face, looking deep into his beloved's brown eyes, which reflected the soft moonlight.

They sat together at the entrance to the cave, and Roier began to distribute the equipment he had brought. Each piece of armor, each weapon, was a symbol of his devotion and care. Things he shouldn't have, but the next day there would be his first big challenge in "purgatory" and Roier didn't care what his team thought, his husband's safety came first!

"I brought you this, it might help you tomorrow," he said, handing Cellbit a set of more advanced armor and weapons. Cellbit's eyes widened at the quality of the items.

"Thanks, love. This will make me last about five seconds longer against Etoiles," he replied, touching his hand.

Roier let out a little laugh, more bitter than the blond was used to seeing on that handsome face. He held Cellbit's face, running his thumbs gently over his cheekbones, over his scars. Roier liked them, he had already made it clear that they made Cellbit the man he is today and Roier loves him like that. His

brown eyes were filled with a determination that could only be seen when he was absolutely sure of something, an intensity that made Cellbit's heart beat faster, melt against his ribs.

"You don't have to carry everything on your own shoulders, *¿sabes, mi amor?"* Roier whispered, his voice soft but firm, "I'm here, I always will be. We promised each other that, remember? And I won't let you face this nightmare alone. I'll look after you as long as I can!"

Cellbit held Roier's hands against his face, feeling the texture of the calluses that told stories of buildings, battles, of challenges they had both overcome, together and apart. He knew that Roier was being sincere, that those words came from the bottom of his heart. But he also knew how difficult it was for Roier, as well as for him, to be torn between the love of his life, his soul mate, and the family he had found. And of course, the prospect of meeting Richas again…

And that worried him.

He mirrored the affection he received from his husband.

"I know, guapito, I know you'd always protect me…" Cellbit began, his voice soft but laden with a concern he couldn't hide, "Of course I'd do anything to protect you too, but..." They laughed a little, the smile lingering longer on Roier's lips from this encounter that had been going on the last few days. "But I don't want you to take any more risks than necessary. If something happens to me, I don't want you- I don't want you to lose yourself trying to save me."

Roier took a deep breath, closing his eyes for a moment before looking at him again, with even more intensity.

"Do you think I could live with myself if something happened to you and I did nothing?" Roier retorted, his voice now a little lower, but still full of emotion, "If you get hurt, if I lose you… There isn't a world where I wouldn't do anything to save you, Cellbo."

"I just…" Cellbit começou, sua voz tremendo um pouco. "I just want you to be careful, love. Because if you get hurt because of me, I don't know if I could..." He swallowed, trying to find the right words, "Do you remember what I told you when we got engaged again?"

Cellbit held onto his husband's hand, his thumb caressing the place where

the ring should have been.

"You would kill for me, but never me." Roier recited, very quietly, almost a whisper. *"Lo sé, gatinho."*

Roier brought their faces even closer, so that their foreheads touched, their eyes fixed on each other.

"We're going to keep going, corazón, because there's no other way. We'll come out of this together, in one piece." Roier said, his voice now low but firm. "And if the world tries to tear us apart, we'll fight it. As we always have. *Tu y yo contra el mundo."*

Cellbit felt tears forming in his eyes, but he didn't let them fall. Instead, he moved closer, pressing his lips to Roier's in a gentle kiss. It was a kiss of painful longing, of fear, of "wanting to be together forever" and of unwavering determination.

Roier's voice was a soothing comfort to him, who felt stronger with every word of encouragement.

And there, amid the hell that had been announced, for a moment, time seemed to stand still as Roier, with a smile on his face, began to softly sing the same song he had introduced to him earlier. The melody enveloped them like a hug, the Brazilian missed hearing his love sing so much, and Cellbit stood up, pulling Roier to him. They began to dance to the soft melody, their bodies moving in perfect harmony.

The world around them disappeared, all the problems, the teams, the difficulties, and for a few minutes, it was just the two of them, sharing a moment of love and peace in the middle of the chaos, the way they used to do ever since they got married.

Cellbit held the brunet's left hand, leaving a light kiss on the knuckles, half bruised after all the recent fights while Roier laid his head on his chest, the sound of Cellbit's heart cradling him as he continued to hum the song to them. The moon cast a silvery glow over them, making the scene almost magical.

As the music echoed in the cave, Cellbit whispered: "We'll always be our *'secreto de amor,'* no matter what happens tomorrow."

Roier nodded, holding him closer. The look in Cellbit's eyes was intense, a mixture of determination and unwavering love.

"Siempre, gatinho," He replied, with firmness and love in his eyes. The kiss that followed was deep, a promise sealed in the darkness of the night.

"You would kill for me, but never me."

It was such a beautiful moment, finally together after so long, so much pain and trouble, that Cellbit didn't even realize that Roier had never promised the same.

Recomeçar

Written by y, translated by Yuu Chida

Cellbit checked the backpack once again before putting it on his back. The trip would be long and he didn't want them to waste time with unforeseen problems.

"Babe, are the boys ready?" he yelled from the living room, hearing a "HOLD ON" in reply, and so he sat on the couch, waiting like his husband had asked.

In the bedroom, Roier finished dressing the shirt on Pepito, while continuing what he was saying to the children. "You have to obey the two of us, it's gonna be a longer adventure, and we could face danger, alright?"

Richarlyson opened a mischievous grin, which got Roier to raise his pointer finger in front of him. "That also counts as you not jumping in front of anything. Obeying, Richas."

The boy pouted, while he tied his hair on top of his head. "Okay, pa."

"Thank you, I knew I could count with your help," he left a kiss on top of the oldest son's head, who smiled. "Now, let's go, there's a Brazilian waiting for us downstairs."

Cellbit smiled as the whole family went down the stairs, leaving a kiss on the kids' foreheads and a quick peck on his husband. "So, shall we get to the first checkpoint, adventurers?"

Roier smiled, and Richarlyson hopped in place, getting ready as his little wings flapped in excitement. "We're going to Starbobby first, right? I love Starbobby!"

Cellbit opened a smile, nodding and turning to Pepito, who had raised his

arm. *"Yes, pequeño?"*

"¿Hoy puedo tomar café?" he asked with his little smile, missing a tooth.

"Today, yes, but not too much, and let's go quick. Onwards!" Cellbit laughed, with Pepito jumping behind him until being held and carried, and Richas sprinting in front of them.

It was going to be an important day.

Symbolisms had always walked next to the family, side by side, everywhere they went.

Of the beginning of a relationship, boat trips.

Of resistance, the companionship of a letter.

Of love, amaranth.

Of pain, Bobby.

The sudden loss of the eldest son was substantially important for the turn in Roier's life. His inner block, the fear, the terror.

The arrival of Cellbit into his routine scared away the bad feelings, but, even then, it did not scare away one of them: *saudade*.

There was no way it could leave when Bobby lived in every single one of his moments, and then, Pepito arrived, turning his life upside down. The empty home was no longer occupied by ghosts of the past, but by a little energetic boy, who would not leave him alone even with the attempts of shutting him off. Roier gave in little by little, until the boy was completely knit with him. The love of a son, which did not split between the three children he had, but rather added to more and more.

The way to Starbobby wasn't long, so the boys went singing some songs they had listened to in cartoons. The chosen ones of the day were songs from Steven Universe which, momentarily, were Richarlyson's obsession, becoming

Pepito's too almost by osmosis.

While singing - completely out of tune - they arrived at Starbobby. The sun still burned over their heads, and the sea next to the favela filled the air with its particles. The wind was chilly in the coffee shop.

"We've reached part one," Cellbit announced, looking at the children, "each will be responsible for their own snacks," he went to the counter, grabbing two small lunch bags, and one slightly bigger for him and Roier, "if you need to use fire, call our help, but for the rest, suit yourselves, alright?" he smiled, turning to Pepito, "and I'll make our coffee."

Pepito and Richas ran down the stairs, going to grab the things for sandwiches and sweets.

Cellbit and Roier took their time in their spots, and, while Roier made the juices, Cellbit made the coffee.

The Brazilian stopped for a moment, while the water was heating, and leaned on one of the counters, looking at the entrance to the basement. The picture of Richarlyson and Bobby was intact in its place, and he smiled, getting close to Roier and leaving a small kiss on his shoulder, hugging his waist. Roier chuckled softly, lightly caressing Cellbit's arms before going back to cutting the fruits.

"Are you okay?" Cellbit asked in a low voice, with his chin propped on the husband's shoulder, who nodded, "actually okay? With all we're gonna do today?"

Roier smiled lightly, with no bitterness, maybe yearning and a pinch of melancholy. "I am. I know it's… hard, but I think it's time to open the doors for new beginnings," he turned to his husband, still smiling. Cellbit could notice, the melancholy little by little became a speck of hope, "showing it to Pepito is letting Bobby… go, but never truly die, because no one will ever forget him. I wanna make sure Pepito's included in that."

Cellbit ran his knuckles through his cheeks, giving it a long kiss and smiling in his direction, "you're the bravest man and the one I love the most in the whole world, did you know that?"

Roier chuckled, "Am I, hm? You are… alright," he said, with a fake egocentric tone.

Cellbit laughed, rolling his eyes in a comic act, "add presumptuous to the list, I forgot that one."

The mood was lighthearted and calm in the cafe, the smell of watermelon blending with the coffee's, the marine melody dancing to the sound of the kids making their snacks and, when everyone was done, Cellbit knew it was time.

"It's time to travel," Cellbit stated and smiled at Roier, who quickly agreed.

"Let's go to *base guapita,*" Roier finished his husband's train of thought, smiling.

All that starts has an end, that's normal… the pain of the end comes to purify.

Roier unlocked the boat, and they got in, going through the same path and laughing at the jokes and memories.

"You're still more beautiful than the scenery…" Cellbit whispered in Roier's ear, who laughed.

Restart, restart.

Seeing the airship in the distance was a funny mix inside Roier's stomach.

The entwine of the bitter melancholy, the sweet memory, the cold saudade.

And, even if these weren't positive.

He felt good.

Inside him, *so much* flashed through, and he felt *everything.*

They climbed up the stairs, Pepito and Richas in a bigger rush than Cellbit and Roier, who took their time and paid attention to the little ones.

They set up the picnic on the open area, and Richarlyson set up the canvas and his paints in one of the easels. He looked a little more quiet.

I will no longer shut myself forever, from here onwards…

The boy painted calmly, and the colors were a reflection of his feelings, in a small and amicable chaos.

It was him, it was *them*.

Pepito, by his side, painted something Richarlyson couldn't see from where he was standing.

"Boys, let's eat?" Cellbit laid down the best towel and Pepito ran to them with his little canvas in hands, "little guy, don't you want to leave it there so it can dry?"

The boy shook his head, smiling and leaning the canvas on his lunch bag. The drawing of a sunset had a lot of orange, yellow and blue, some red flowers drawn in the corner with childlike petals, "I called Bobby to come eat with us, he said he was coming and I wanna show it to him."

Cellbit and Roier looked at each other and smiled lightly. The saudade

eased, Bobby was inside each of them, they didn't have to say goodbye to him.

Roier smiled and looked at the sun setting in the horizon.

The pain of the end comes to purify.

Restart.

Restart.

"Hi, Bobby," Richarlyson smiled, starting to eat.

"Hi, Bobby," Cellbit repeated, widening his smile and sharing the food between them.

Roier organized a little vase next to them with a sprout of a blue flower, leaving it next to the easel with Richarlyson's painting.

"Hola, mijito," Roier smiled and started calmly eating.

The family would always be complete.

New beginnings weren't easy, but that was not a problem.

It was good to be back, and they would always be back.

Sussurros da Aurora

Written by justsolbtw, translated by Artfulstar

Cellbit sighed, picking up another document from among the countless resting on his desk.

He had been confined to his secret hideaway for forty-eight hours, keeping him active with an excessive amount of coffee.

He knew it wasn't healthy, but he had to keep going. He was so close to solving the last riddle, he could feel it inside him, like a detective's sixth sense.

And when the letters jumbled up in the middle of the sentences due to exhaustion, he shook his head and took big gulps of coffee, putting them back together again.

He couldn't stop, not now.

Just a little longer.

Cucurucho, the federation, the riddles…

"Cellbit!"

Roier came stomping across the wooden floor of the office.

The blond raised his head, surprised to find the door wide open and his husband's handsome face in an angry frown.

"Guapito? What-"

"Why haven't you come home yet?" Roier demanded to know, stopping in front of Cellbit's desk and crossing his arms.

"I'm almost finished, I-"

"Did you even sleep?"

The blond looked down at the floor, aware of the dark circles under his eyes.

"No." He replied, unable to lie to his husband.

"Let's go home."

"I can't-"

"It wasn't a question."

Cellbit looked straight into the brown eyes.

"I'm almost done." He said, pleadingly.

Roier denied it slowly with his head.

"No, no. You need to sleep."

Cellbit sighed in surrender. He got up from his chair and walked over to his husband on the other side of the table.

When he reached the brunet's side, however, he was distracted by a document he saw out of the corner of his eye, turned his attention to it, and immediately pulled it closer to his eyes.

He swore for a split second that he had spotted a key point in the

investigation, but perhaps it was just sleep deprivation.

However, his attention was forcibly shifted when he felt himself being lifted.

Roier, who was now holding him bride-style, glared at him in annoyance, forcing Cellbit to drop the paper and turn to himself.

The Mexican cut him off and, without saying a word, walked off with his beloved in his arms.

"Guapito, I don't want to sleep." He protested as they left the office.

"You can't stay awake for so long, Cellbit."

Knowing that his husband was right, the blond kept quiet while ignoring the slight twinge in his heart at the use of his name instead of his affectionate nickname.

The two of them soon teleported back to the castle, Roier demanding to continue carrying Cellbit in his arms, and Cellbit, wrapped in his lover's huge arms, didn't complain at any point, letting his husband carry him.

"Guapito, do I really need to...?" Tried the blond once more, as they climbed the stairs to the bedroom.

"Yes." The dark-haired man answered without hesitation.

As they entered the room, Roier left Cellbit on the bed and walked to the entrance to the balcony.

"I'm going to stay here until you go to sleep." He declared, closing the curtain.

With that act, the room went dark, except for the rebellious beams of the first sunbeams of the day that insisted on escaping through the gaps in the fabric.

"But don't you need breakfast?"

The brunet then walked over to the bed, lay down on it, and looked deep into his husband's blue irises.

"I know you, *gatinho*, I know you'll try to run away if I'm not here."

Feeling like an open book, Cellbit sighed. His plan had failed before he could even finish working it out in his mind.

"All right, but I'm not feeling sleepy." Said the blond, turning to stare at the ceiling.

Roier rolled his eyes, a slightly smug smile growing on his face.

"My love, you always say that but you end up sleeping."

Cellbit turned again to look at the dark-haired man and his handsome smile. The dim light made him seem spectral, almost unreal. Ethereal. As if he wasn't from this world.

And, in fact, the blond considered his husband too perfect to be from this simple, mediocre planet. Roier was far beyond anything that this measly piece of land represented.

The brunet in question turned his gaze to Cellbit, finding blue irises that seemed to admire him, exploring every part of his face, even though, to his husband, it was already abundantly familiar.

"I missed you." Confessed the blond.

"Then why didn't you come back?"

Cellbit looked away, feeling a heaviness settle inside his chest.

"Would you talk with me until I fall asleep?" He asked, avoiding the question.

Roier sighed.

"Of course. What do you want to talk about?" He gave in.

"Anything."

"Would you still love me if I was a worm?"

Caught off guard, the blond began to laugh.

"Guapito, what kind of question is that?"

Sometimes Roier's mind wandered to places he himself was afraid of.

He found himself thinking about the future, what it would be like, or

whether it would even exist. At the same time, he reflected on the natural consequences of old age, about when it would come, and with it, youth was gone, taking with it all the jovial beauty he was known for, he thought, what would be left?

He didn't consider himself vain, but he was aware of the face he had.

When all his beauty drained away with the grains of sand in the huge hourglass, his gatinho would still love him, right?

Most people in his life only saw him as that, a pretty face, someone with the privilege of beauty.

Nothing but rosy cheeks and a defined jaw. Nothing but a carnal and ephemeral charm that would disappear with the spring of his life, falling and crumbling with the leaves of the trees.

His *gatinho* was different, wasn't he?

"You haven't answered the question."

Looking at Roier, Cellbit found seriousness behind the silly question and was surprised. He noticed a hidden concern behind such unpretentious words and, although he didn't know exactly what it was, he didn't laugh anymore.

"I've always liked worms, ever since I was a kid." He began, "I even had one as a pet..."

This time it was Roier who laughed, taken by surprise.

"What?!" The brunet shouted.

"So, yes." He smiled, "Of course, I'd love you even as a worm. In fact, I'd love you even if you turned into a rat."

Roier smiled, letting out a snort of laughter.

"A rat?"

"I'll love you no matter what, even if the federation turns you into a rat, a cockroach, or a fly."

The dark-haired man laughed, starting to stroke the Brazilian's blond hair.

"That would never happen, *cabrón*."

"But if it did, I'd still love you."

Roier smiled broadly, and it was as if the dark room lit up.

"I get it, *pendejo*."

Satisfied as he received the affection on the top of his head, Cellbit closed his eyes, letting himself sink into the sensation of his husband's delicate fingertips stroking across his scalp.

"How was your day, *guapito*?"

"Good, I guess?"

"What did you do?"

"Why so interested in my day all of a sudden?"

"I like hearing your voice..."

The brunet let out a little laugh.

"You like my voice? Then I guess I can talk a bit..."

Cellbit smiled, while Roier began to tell his husband about the previous day.

He recounted, in detail, how Richas and Pepito had gone to play hide and seek and how this had resulted in a cute hug scene after the youngest hadn't understood the game and thought that the eldest had simply left.

The dark-haired man laughed, but then his face closed up and he slipped into an awkward silence.

Cellbit opened his eyes to find his husband staring at the ceiling.

"What is it?"

Roier sighed.

"Every night when you don't come back, Pepito asks me if you're going to kiss him goodnight. And Richas wants to play strong, but he becomes strangely silent as soon as night falls." He said sadly.

The blond felt a pang of guilt hit his chest. He had never stopped to think about his children.

"Why do you keep doing it?" Roier asked.

"The Federation has already done so many things that they need to pay for, I just want to see justice served."

"You need to at least give your mind a rest once in a while."

Cellbit loved his family more than anything, of course. Still, what he wanted most was to find ways to keep them safe, and for him, the main way to do that was to put an end to the Federation.

But it was too hard for him to see time slipping away faster than he could keep up with it, taking precious hours and days with it, grasping at every millisecond in an attempt to get more of that precious time.

It was like swimming against the current, trying to enjoy every second despite all the signs that he shouldn't be doing so.

He was destroying himself trying to save everyone else.

He felt responsible for unraveling all the mysteries and designing every strategy, for putting all the weight of the world on his shoulders so that no one else would have to do it.

Especially so that Roier wouldn't have to do it.

He looked into his lover's eyes and found concern emanating from the exorbitant brown irises.

What was the point of carrying the world if he was far away from them?

What was the point of trying to spare him pain if doing so only brought him more misery?

Cellbit turned his body towards his husband, hugging him in the process.

"I promise I'll come back every day."

Roier smiled, satisfied.

"And if you don't come back, I'll bring Pepito and Richas to mess up all your documents."

The blond let out a light laugh.

"There's no need for that, you alone are enough to make me give up on the papers."

"That's not what I saw earlier."

A pout slowly formed on the brunet's lips.

Cellbit smiled.

"That will never happen again, my love."

"How can I be sure?" He asked in a dramatic tone, looking up at the ceiling.

"*Guapito,* before here I was convinced that I knew what my favorite puzzle was. Then I met you, and the moment I looked into your deep brown eyes, I realized I was wrong. You are incomparably the most intriguing and interesting of puzzles, and yet the only one I've never felt any desire to solve. Do you know why?"

Roier looked into the blue irises again and waited. The blond smiled, stretching his scarred skin as a result.

"No, why?" Asked the dark-haired man.

"Because if I do, it's over, *guapito*, and I want to have you with me every day."

The brunet couldn't help but smile, melting at his husband's words.

"You're an idiot."

Cellbit brought his left hand up to Roier's face, resting it on his jaw and lightly caressing his cheek with his thumb.

"Maybe I am."

"But that's okay, you're my idiot."

Roier returned his husband's embrace, bringing the tip of his nose to his and moving his head in a delicate nose kiss.

Cellbit smelled his husband's scent and smiled sleepily.

"I'm your idiot, *mí amor."*

The dark-haired man stroked the blue-eyed man's blond hair again, in no

hurry to get out of the grip.

"You know you can call me whenever you need help with your investigation, don't you?"

"I know, but I didn't want to bother you." The blond replied, shifting on the mattress and burying his head in his lover's chest.

"Hey, *pendejo*, I like to help! Promise you'll call me next time?"

"I promise."

Roier smiled, and silence fell over the room, broken only by their breathing and the morning chirping of the birds.

After several minutes of silence, the brunet tried to get out of bed, but Cellbit tightened his embrace around Roier, rubbing his face against the brown-eyed man's chest and making him laugh.

"What?" He asked between laughs.

"Stay." He pleaded, drowsily.

Roier smiled broadly and arched an eyebrow.

"Why so clingy all of a sudden?"

"I miss you, I was stupid."

The dark-haired man laughed, hugging his husband again and this time closing his eyes.

"Okay, I'll stay just a little longer, *pendejo*."

Cellbit didn't reply but seemed to accept the decision.

Roier placed a kiss on the top of his husband's head.

"I love you."

The blond pulled away from his husband's chest to look him in the eye.

"I love you forever, *guapito*." He replied sleepily, his eyes half-open.

Roier let out a little chuckle, thinking it was cute how Cellbit's face was crumpled.

He moved closer, placing kisses on his beloved's eyelids and nose. Cellbit smiled and closed his eyes completely.

"I love you forever and ever, *gatinho*."

The blond didn't reply, but continued to smile, burying his face in his husband's neck and hugging him tightly.

Roier ran his fingers through his husband's blond hair, hoping that he would finally fall asleep.

He ended up humming a quiet tune, as he was used to do to lull Pepito to sleep.

"Todos os dias quando acordo…"

And to the sound of the soothing melody, along with an affectionate stroke on the back of his neck, Cellbit fell asleep in Roier's arms.

He had never slept as well as he did that day, perhaps because of sleep deprivation, perhaps because of the relief that settled in his chest.

After all, that was when he realized that although the hourglass of time was ticking away all the time, regardless of any circumstance, they had time of their own.

"...temos todo o tempo do mundo…" Sang Roier.

Yes, they had all the time in the world.

And if he was to enjoy every minute and second, every tiny grain of sand, it would be with those he loved most.

It would be with his family.

The Reason is You

maiatck

Ncoffeetea

Yorancy_

ArcticaTheFox

soup--champ

The Reason is You

FIREFLIES

Written by LisannAlt, translated by rlyPan

His eyes began to weigh down, his tense and sore body begged him for a rest while he, stubborn, prepared to drink from his fifth cup of coffee in the day; He had no idea of time since he locked himself in that room, nor had much passed when he received those documents at the door of his home.

He closed his eyes when the words and symbols on the paper began to make him dizzy, he ran his hand over his face in complete frustration a tired sigh was expelled from his lungs to his mouth slowly, he knew that if he did not stop now he would end up having a collapse, since for a while he no longer had the same energy to carry out his research, In the long run, things as simple as getting out of bed began to become almost impossible due to the fatigue that his body had been accumulating for weeks, almost months.

The only good thing he could get out of all that was having someone who constantly supported him to do things as simple as standing up every day.

He knew it was time to stop, at least for the next five hours, he gathered some of the papers scattered all over the desk and arranged them inside a folder, took his cup of coffee and gave it one last drink before leaving it to leave the room, on the way he gave himself enough time to observe the time, it was past eight o'clock at night, surely his family would already be home.

When he woke up that morning he had decided that this would be a family day, he would take advantage of the little peace that was still left on the island and take his husband and son for a walk, but all joy at spending time with his family was dashed when Roier told him that someone had left a package at the door. Then, seeing that it was not a common investigation by the federation, he knew that his family day had to be postponed. He had apologized a thousand times to his husband and son for having given them the illusion that they would be together, both Roier and Richarlyson let him know that everything was fine, that they understood the situation and that they would always have time to dedicate to each other.

He made sure to lock the door before heading home, as it was not an investigation assigned by the federation he decided that the best and safest thing to do was to carry it out in his office in Ordo Theoritas, the night sky was beginning to embrace the atmosphere, the fireflies had taken over the favelas lighting their way, The cool wind gently crashed against his face as he quickened his pace, if he hurried he could still wish his son goodnight.

When he reached the shattered bridge he could notice the lights of the castle on, he smiled, surely Roier was trying to make Richarlyson finally sleep while the minor slipped away from his failed attempts to catch him.

He would be in charge of thanking him for a lifetime for taking care of Richarlyson that day, he knew that Roier loved his son as if he were his own and little Richas was not far behind, it didn't take an expert to see how much they enjoyed being with each other even if they were just insulting each other or wasting time doing things that only they understood. The relationship between his husband and son was unique, and even the least experienced islander knew that.

Although Cellbit knew that this bond between them was so special for a very small and unruly reason that he visited them every evening.

He was a little surprised when when he arrived there was no noise, not even shouts, laughter or hurried footsteps, the place was in such a deep silence that he could feel fear freezing his bones.

"Roier?" - He asked on the air, as if he was going to get an immediate answer in the middle of the calm.

With some fear he began to walk to the stairs, the small bugs of light illuminated the gloomy space, soon he was greeted by the warm lights of the dining room which was empty.

However, this time he could hear something.

"Richarlyson?" - He asked the air again as he advanced, the murmurs intensified as he walked to the stairs that would take him to his room, a warm and dim light dimly illuminated the floor of the entrance.

Then his heart began to beat singing a sweet melody that expanded the warmth in his chest.

"And anytime you feel the pain, hey Jude, refrain…"

Resting his shoulder on the doorframe, he gazed with a smile, and tenderness spreading across his chest, at the beautiful scene involving his husband and son.

Roier had such a beautiful voice when singing.

"Don't carry the world upon your shoulders," he caressed the little boy's curls. *"For well you know that it's a fool who plays it cool…"*

Hearing Richarlyson's soft giggles from his husband's tickling was like a direct attack on his heart, and a wave of adoration spread to every corner of her body. He smiled softly without taking his celestial orbs off the scene, in complete silence.

His favorite part of the day was coming home, being greeted by his husband and his exquisite presence spending the rest of the evening with him doing anything, because no matter how ridiculous or simple it was, it was always wonderful to be by his side.

It was so wonderful to exist at the same time as him.

Richarlyson's eyes sparkled when from the window the fireflies he had observed before entered the room to witness the small concert, the little boy did not take long to sit on the bed to observe the small insects that hypnotized him with their light.

"Pa!" He exclaimed in emotion *"Tem luz na bunda!"*

Roier laughed, Richarlyson continued to admire the little fireflies peeking out from the window sill.

"They have a huge butt, like me."

He smiled slowly in his shyness, the room was suddenly invaded by laughter followed by jokes and ridiculous jokes. What was once a tender and cozy atmosphere, did not take long to become a funny and pleasant one.

Roier had a beautiful ability to make everyone happy, to make people laugh even in the most critical and perhaps most unfortunate moments. And I loved that about him.

His husband was so charismatic, how could he not fall madly in love with a man like that?

He decided to approach slowly, Richarlyson was the first to finally notice his presence, with a smile he stood on the bed *"Pai!"*

Roier did not take long to turn around as soon as he felt his husband's arms around his waist as he knelt next to him, he received an amused smile

from those lips he loved to kiss so much.

"When did you arrive?" - He got a little closer to the body of others, Cellbit received him by completely encircling him with one arm until he stuck it to his chest while with the other he hugged his son.

"If you want, I'll go," he joked, outlining his husband's expression with his celestial orbs.

"Yes, please, you're interrupting our father and son moment."

Cellbit laughed, gently pinching the opponent's waist- *"Pendejo".*

The atmosphere began to feel warm again, Roier laughed as he laid his head on his shoulder as Richarlyson stepped back to admire the fireflies in the window again.

His heart began to beat in synchrony with the opposite, his chest was invaded by the warmth of the other's body, and as if it were the first time he had Roier so close, he felt his body tremble subtly as soon as he perceived the delicious aroma of his husband.

"Have you been there for a long time?" - He looked up, Roier's breathing slowed, while his seemed to become erratic due to nerves, he nodded contemplating the beauty of the man in his arms.

He gently pinched his rib with an amused smile, "I'm not a stalker, just a poor man who loves to watch his beautiful husband."

"¿Apoco sí tilin?"

Cellbit rolled his eyes, drawing more to his body the one that lay in his arms, as if the closeness they maintained was not enough, as if he wished with all his strength that both bodies could merge to always be by his side.

As if Roier's body was vanishing in his arms.

"I love you…"

He could barely hear it, the contrary voice had emanated from his throat almost with a hellish weakness.

"What?"

"I love you... Cellbit…"

Suddenly, the dim reddish lighting of the habilitation intensified, the laughter that came from his son by the window faded almost as quickly as the fireflies that, he swore, had kept him surrounded just a couple of minutes ago.

"Roier?" - A piercing anguish settled like knives on his chest.

He feared when the body in his arms began to lose strength in his arms, like water between his fingers, as if it were beginning to fade into smoke, as if it were dying

Then at last he was able to emerge from the reverie in which, cruelly, his mind had held him captive for the last ten minutes, the exact time the man had left in his arms.

"No... Roier…" His chest was compressed in sharp anguish, just enough so that the body in his arms began to look blurred. "Guapito, don't go!"

In tears he clung again to Roier's almost lifeless body, the man she loved so much.

He felt stupid, how could he be so weak to his own mind? How could he let his head be guided to a vivid memory, only to dampen the pain that was now slowly killing him?

He heard his teammates murmur and then walk away, he had lost all that purgatory, his family, his sanity, and now the man who until a few minutes ago was his only light, his hope and his everything.

He hugged the body tightly, Roier no longer moved and much less emitted any sound, he knew what that meant, but he did not dare to accept it. He felt like something very small was resting on her arm, in tears she looked up hoping to find Jaiden, Slime, or anyone willing to keep her company in his pain. But it was not like that, instead, one of the small insects in his memory greeted him almost bitterly.

He smiled weakly, and for a couple of seconds, because it was funny to think that this little insect was possibly the soul of his beloved seeking to comfort him.

Cellbit remembers the day Roier came to his office spreading joy, he was happy just keeping him company, and Cellbit loved him for that. That same day, he told his about his most recent discovery.

“Did you know that according to the Japanese, fireflies are the souls of deceased people?”

Cellbit was never a fan of legends, much less myths.

But what else could he believe in when his world had just fallen apart? What was left for him to do if not existing at the same time as Roier was painful?

Perhaps, in another life, they could better adore the existence of the other.

Meu Abrigo

Written by Annah,translated by Artfulstar

Cellbit took a deep breath and drew his sword close to him, putting the black gas mask on his face. A few days ago he and all the residents of Quesadilla Island were sent to a mysterious new island called “purgatory”, not a very pleasant name, and forced to play a totally sadistic game by a completely black and mysterious creature.

He introduced himself as “Osito” and divided the participants into three teams represented by colors so that they could compete against each other. Cellbit and Roier were unfortunately separated, Cellbit going to the red team called “Bolas” and Roier to the green team called “Green Gay Ninjas”.

Cellbit couldn’t explain the extent of his despair when he realized that he and his husband were on opposite teams and would eventually have to compete against each other. Before they were dumped on the mysterious island, he caught Roier’s gaze and saw that he was just as desperate as he was.

And so began the most hellish days of Cellbit’s life. Everything in that

place was designed to make everyone's life a living hell, from the red color of the skies, the fickle temperatures, the heavy, hard-to-breathe air, the unwanted challenges, and so on.

But for the blond, the hardest thing of all was being away from Roier, because no matter how bad things were, if Roier was by his side then everything would be fine, he was his haven and his greatest certainty. Being without him was like losing a part of himself.

They were one, from the moment they united their lives on that altar their souls became one. He was the peace that Cellbit so desperately sought, the transformation that made his life of pain and sadness blossom beautifully like amaranth in a garden.

It was no overstatement to say that separating them was the worst pain they could suffer, along with the loss of their children. And in the current scenario where they both had no idea where their children were and were forced to fight on opposite sides, this pain only grew.

The only good thing about the place was that his teammates were nice people whom he trusted, and they gave him some comfort as they listened to Cellbit talk for hours about Roier and how much he loved him. It was as if everyone there knew how hard it was being, especially for him, so much so that Jaiden and Foolish told him about their own experiences with Roier as a way of cheering him up a bit.

In the few moments that they did meet, whether during dynamics or duels, they always found a way to kill the distance, whether with subtle touches, flirting, hugs, whispers, or even just an exchange of glances.

Because Cellbit's sapphire-colored eyes conveyed sincere love and unparalleled admiration, Roier's chocolate-colored eyes conveyed intense love and a flood of affection. Soon, with just a brief glance, they could both feel their hearts racing and the flame of their love for each other burning even brighter.

It was from these little moments that Cellbit drew the strength to carry on and not go mad.

Now they were preparing for another dynamic proposed by that weird one-eyed bear, a direct duel between the three teams in which the main objective

was to "kill" as many times as possible. This would have worried Cellbit a lot if it hadn't been for the strange phenomenon where no one actually died there, they just felt a little pain and then were teleported to their respective team's base.

Strange? A fucking lot, but Cellbit learned that it was better not to even try to understand what was really happening on that island because everything seemed so far beyond human comprehension, supernatural in an unusual way.

"Cellbit! You ready, mate?" Philza's voice snapped the Brazilian out of his reverie.

"Oh, yes! I'm coming!" Cellbit sighed, put on his gas mask, a trademark of the red team, and went to find his teammates.

Together, all the teams made their way to the area set aside for the duel, where instructions would be given, and the battle soon got underway.

Cellbit was quick to get his first kills, he was an assassin after all. His experience coupled with his rage only spurred him on to kill as many people as possible as quickly as possible.

He had just "killed" Fit and as he watched his friend's body disappear to be teleported away, a familiar voice reached his ears.

"Look at the King of Alcatraz," Roier sneaked up behind him, *"I see you are still in good shape, gatinho."*

A smile formed on Cellbit's lips and he turned to face his lover.

"Guapito, I was wondering where you were."

"Did you miss me, my love?" Roier teased as he approached, the sword he carried firmly in his right hand.

"Of course, and I know you missed me too," Smiling, Cellbit took a few seconds to examine the Mexican better, "Did you come here just to tease me or do you have something in mind?"

"You know," Roier started, "I always wanted to challenge the *King of Alcatraz."*

"Really? Today's your lucky day then. I'm right here." Cellbit quickly drew his sword "Are you prepared to lose, my love?"

"Always ready to beat you, gatinho."

In a few moments, both swords met and they began a fight right there. Roier struck heavy blows with his sword and moved quickly, while Cellbit was more strategic, always watching the other's movements carefully.

They were wrestling, but the words that came out of their mouths were compliments, flirtations and little teases. And they remained like that for a good few minutes until, due to the blond's carelessness, Roier managed to knock him to the ground and trap him there, using his body as a barrier so that the other couldn't get out.

Roier's sword was stuck in the ground just above Cellbit's shoulder, who stared at him intensely and gave him a proud smile.

"Seems like I caught a kitty." Roier joked.

Cellbit smiled and moved his fingers to his husband's brown hair, giving it a gentle caress as he ran his fingers through the strands he loved so much.

"It looks like you won this one, sunshine." His sapphire-colored eyes overflowed with affection, "Do you want to kill me? So far no one from the other teams has even managed to attempt that, I think that honor should be yours."

Roier stared at the man below him with a brief insecurity in his gaze.

"Kill you? I don't... I don't think I can do that." The idea of killing Cellbit, the one he loved with all his soul, was something that Roier would never consider even in his worst nightmares.

"Hey, sunshine." Cellbit met the other's gaze "It's okay, remember? I'm not really going to die, I'm just going to be teleported back to where I started."

"I know, but…"

"It's okay guapito, it will be an honor to 'die' by your hand." The blond smiled sweetly and took the other's face affectionately, "I trust you."

Even though his heart ached, Roier did as the other man asked, but not before planting a chaste kiss on his husband's soft lips, watching his body disappear shortly afterwards with a huge smile on his face. And even though he knew that Cellbit was probably alive and well now, despair seized Roier.

What if he had really killed Cellbit? What if he never got to see those blue eyes he loved so much? What if he never got to kiss his husband's lips again? What if he never got to hug him again or cuddle up in his arms?

This fear made Roier run as fast as he could to the place where the members of the red team had reappeared, sighing with relief when he found Cellbit there, alive and talking to one of his teammates. Relieved after checking on his husband's condition, Roier returned to his mission, even more focused, killing as many as appeared in front of him.

At the end of the game, Cellbit and Roier didn't even pay attention to the announcement of the winning team, let alone care. All they wanted now was a moment alone, to finally be able to hug each other like they hadn't done for some time. Every minute they spent with that weird one-eyed creature talking, the more they wanted to get out of there.

Even some of the teammates could notice the restlessness of the two men, who didn't look away from each other for a second, ignoring everything.

When the competition was finally over and the teams were dismissed, Cellbit and Roier didn't wait for a second before heading to a more secluded cave that they used as a meeting point.

When they met there, both bodies collided in a tight embrace, Roier's arms wrapped around Cellbit's torso so tightly that the other staggered a little, laughing at his husband's despair and returning the hug.

"Hey, guapito! You don't have to squeeze me so hard, I'm not going to disappear this time." The Mexican lifted his gaze to his husband's face, looking at him so sweetly that for a few seconds, he reminded Cellbit of the way he had looked at him on their wedding day.

"Don't ever ask me to kill you again, it was one of the worst experiences of my life!" Cellbit couldn't help but laugh at the indignation in Roier's voice as he spoke, "Don't laugh, asshole!"

Slowly stopping laughing, Cellbit held Roier's face affectionately with his calloused and scarred hands.

"I'm sorry my love, but you know how things are, they're watching us all the time during the games. If you hadn't killed me, maybe you'd end up receiving some kind of punishment." The blond let his lips press against the

other's, "And I wasn't really going to die."

"And what guarantee did I have of that? Gatinho, these federation bastards already took my son from me, they could have taken you too." Roier still felt his heart clench painfully at the memory of Bobby and at the possibility of losing his husband too.

"Hey, hey! I'm here, love, I'm fine." Pulling the other back into the embrace, Cellbit stroked his brown hair, his large nails running carefully through the strands, "If they want to kill me, they'll have to try a lot harder, I've already killed a lot of them and I can still kill them again."

They laughed at the memory of the terror that Cellbit had unleashed on the Federation just before they went to purgatory. There were countless victims of the Brazilian's moment of insanity, who, with a vast history of murders attributed to him, had no difficulty in accomplishing such a feat.

When Roier found out about it, well, he honestly couldn't have cared less. He loved his husband, and he even loved this psychopathic side of him, he even found it attractive how Cellbit could be the best of all killers, but act like a teenager in love with him.

"I love you so much, you know that, yes?" Roier said after a while, smiling widely.

"I know." The blue eyes stared more intensely at Roier, "I love you too, you're the fulfillment of dreams I didn't even dare to imagine."

"Pendejo." A chuckle was heard from Roier, "Don't you dare say such nice things to me while you think so badly of yourself! You deserve me as much as I deserve you, this is the life you always deserved."

A slight smile adorned Cellbit's lips and he felt happy, even in that hellish place, because Roier is like a dream, which he thinks about from dawn until he goes to bed.

Roier's eyes are the light that guides him through the darkness of his world, next to him Cellbit never feels alone, Cellbit's laughter is happier with Roier and their love is the most beautiful of all the songs ever written.

ANUNCIAÇÃO

Written by Ámbar, translated by Cellorionn

He looks beautiful.

Cellbit sighs. No, no.

He is beautiful.

The calloused fingers wander through the folds of the photograph with slow caress, afraid to touch its colored part and dirty it with the skin still a little dirty from the butter grease of the pamonha he was eating — he was so

pretty, Roier immortalized there was so beautiful, what if Cellbit ruined it? — before.

At the core, there are other feelings too. Affection. Admiration. Passion. And Saudade, that one without translation.

And guilt.

Even if he avoids think about the past events, it always comes to mind to ruin every glimpse of joy he had. The embarrassment at church, exhausting drinking, his father-in-law — or ex-father-in-law, Cellbit thinks bitterly. It was a flood of misfortunes so intense that he could've laugh if he hadn't been already miserable. And he is trying to move on, he really is. His son is smiling and playing with his friends, far from his father cause he knows that Cellbit is busy thinking about the past and the future then enjoying the June festivals.

"Thank you again for the picture, Phil."

Philza was walking around handing out photographs to everyone he sees, with the camera comfortable in his hands. He is a great photographer, looks like he has lucky in always capturing the best moments. When he came to Cellbit, he accepted innocently thinking he would receive a photo of Richas or something like that.

It was a photo of Roier, a beautiful one with the low sun in the background at the moment of capture of that sweet and unbothered smile, with him dressed in checkered clothes, typical of his country — *Cellbit's country* — that left him ecstatic, almost as amazed like the first time that he saw Roier dressed like that, so ethereal and bright and catching in the middle of that crowd. Roier has this effect on him. It must be work of love, at least, it's something that Richas would say.

"Put a smile on that face, Cell!" Philza slapped him on the shoulders. "It's Festa Junina!"

The impression it gives it's that Philza is more excited for the party than Cellbit — and at this point, it's not just an impression.

"It's complicated…"

"Not all is lost, you know." Philza blinks, like he knows something that Cellbit doesn't. "Let's dance around the fire! Come, come!"

Cellbit was invited — read: pulled — to the huge central fire. The sun begins its sunset next to the fireflies that venture close to the fire. The children sing, spin, dance and clap among themselves, in a constantly joy that involuntarily brings a smile to the investigator's tired face. Okay, he can forget about your problems for a while and enjoy the moment. Isn't often that a Festa Junina happens, is it?

The dance is simply and a bit clumsy. Everyone taps their feet around the bonfire, clapping their hands and twirling their hats. The kids are the ones having the most fun, spinning around, although some adults — like Philza — seem more like kids than the little ones themselves. Among so much pure fun and joy, Cellbit momentarily forgets the conflicting feelings in his heart.

Until he turns around and comes face to face with Roier.

Roier is staring at him deeply with his pair of coffee-colored irises. His hair is a little messy and sprinkled with scraps of fabric from the party and his cheeks are red from the effort of dancing. He looks so ethereal, so real, so immaculate, so, so. Shit, he is so beautiful that it leaves Cellbit breathless, sweaty hands hidden in his pockets — and it's not because of the heat of the fire between them.

They've been apart for a while, but Roier's gauze can still give him goosebumps. He often lies, his friends said they found the connection between the two bizarre. *"It's like you two speak with your eyes"* Philza once commented.

It happens. Again.

I want to talk to you.

At least, that's what Cellbit "hears" in Roier's fierce squint.

At the castle, in half an hour.

That's what he would have answered if he had opened his mouth. Roier visibly swallows hard, nodding before turning to his sister Leonarda with a beautiful smile.

For the first fifteen minutes, Cellbit goes with Richarlyson to eat some tamales at the grocery store before leaving him with his other parents — not before saying goodbye with a stroking of the hair, of course. There's still the

taste of corn when he waves to the guests, walking in anxious haste down the road to his house. Sometimes, he hears a twig or two being stepped on behind him. At other times, it would have left him bristling with alertness. He doesn't care, however, precisely because he knows who was also following him on the way home.

To the house that should be theirs.

As he steps onto the soft red carpet of the Throne Room, Cellbit sighs and turns to the visitor. He is relieved that Roier seems equally nervous. His lover is the type who masks his emotions with a smile and a well-founded joke on the tip of his tongue, rarely allowing anyone to see behind his unbreakable mask. His children can. Jaiden can.

And Cellbit too.

"Hey."

"Hola."

"You..." Cellbit clears his throat. It feels dry. And he looks like a fucking idiot who can barely pronounce two syllables without stuttering. "Did you want to talk to me?"

"Si, yo..." He took a deep breath, pushing back some rebellious strands of hair that fell over his eyes. Cellbit's hands itch. He wanted to push them away. "My abuelo awake."

"Is he… okay?"

"Well alive, yes."

Holy shit.

Cellbit still doesn't like the old man, and he knows how it must be mutual. He still cheated after all this, as if he had been treated like an idiot. How would he know that his grandfather was just joking? No one plays at hating each other, Cellbit thinks. Much less hating Roier. He couldn't even think about it.

But now that he knows how positive — and weird — the relationship between Roier and his grandfather is, Cellbit is happy to know that his beloved must be happy for the sake of the insufferable old man.

"That's great."

Roier looked him straight in the eyes — oh, those beautiful coffee-colored eyes — and smiled at him for the first time that day.

"Yes, it is."

It turns out that his grandfather's return brought new feelings between them. Or rather, it recovered what was lost, if you can call it that. Roier took a few steps forward, speaking in low, slow Spanish. A bit shy, even. He is extremely captivating. The more time they spend together, the more new facets of Roier are revealed to Cellbit. Day after day. Conversation after conversation.

Is it possible to fall more in love with someone with each passing second?

"Te extrañé."

And even though this was not a very common word in the portuguese-spanish vocabulary, living with Roier made him learn new words. He even has a Portuguese-Spanish dictionary hidden among his paranormal books. This word is something similar to…

"Saudade…" he replied, almost out of breath. "I missed you too, Roier."

"Good, *bebé."*

They talked about everything. And also, about nothing. It is as if they had rewound time and returned to the beginning of their relationship, where long glances brought strangeness and phantom touches of hands culminated in low, sweet laughter. Falling in love with Roier is like being an eternal teenager in love. At the same time, it is knowing how to recognize the limits of your passion. It is becoming responsible for what you feel. It is…

It is everything.

"Being far from you is one of the most difficult things in the world." Roier is always so honest about what he feels, even if it is too much or embarrassing. He will always say it. Especially when it is Cellbit he is talking to. There is just this natural desire to want to be himself with him. Sometimes, Roier thinks that Cellbit is not aware of the power he has. "I no longer want this."

"Be with me?" Cellbit swallowed hard.

Roier snorted and slapped his ear.

"Be far from you, idiot." he corrected him, pouting his lips. "Be with you

is the thing I want the most."

The two of them are sitting on the bench on the balcony of the room — their room. The afternoon turns into night before them, the few stars appearing in the lightest blue part of the sky. Roier stares at him with his barriers lowered and his focus scattered, seeming so open to everything, as long as Cellbit was there too. His eyes were half-closed and bright as ever, so sincere it hurt.

And damn, Cellbit wanted him so much too.

"I suffered away from you day after day." It left without permission. Cellbit saw himself like an open book there, on that balcony, letting himself be read by Roier's expectant gaze. "I cried, freaked out, mumbled, messed up my hair and did absurd crazy things away from you."

"I know."

That little laugh indicated that he was remembering the embarrassment in the church. It took Roier a while to understand that June weddings were not real weddings, and even longer for him to understand that it was all just a pure outburst driven by emotion, sentimentality and desperation.

"That was a moment of weakness."

"Fraquessa," he repeats, his accent making all that tension more bearable "you said?"

" *You* are one of my greatest weaknesses, Roier." And that was one of the purest, most honest and heartfelt sentences that Cellbit had ever said, so real that it brought surprise to the Mexican's eyes. Wide. Adorable. "I killed just for the chance, however small, of not being able to marry you. And I know it was stupid, reckless and irrational, but…"

Cellbit blinks. There is an uncomfortable burning in his eyes. He would like to blame the sunlight, but he is already too low to be able to take responsibility for his sins. The sunset comes slowly, as if allowing them to talk for longer under enough light so that they can observe the smallest details of each other's faces.

"I didn't want to lose you." He sighs. "I don't want to lose you, Roier."

Roier's fingers come to wipe away a treacherous tear that accumulates in the corner of his left eye. Cellbit blinks, the silhouette of his beloved becoming

blurred for a brief moment. He sees affection in Roier. At the same time, there is also doubt and a little fear.

"Would you kill me, Cellbit?"

And for Cellbit, that was an easy question. Too easy.

"No." He looked into his eyes and kept his gaze steady. He wanted to show certainty; so that Roier would feel certainty too. "I would kill and I killed for you." He speaks syllable by syllable, phoneme by phoneme. And it's the most honest thing that comes out of his mouth that day. "But never you."

Roier's almond-shaped eyes widen like saucers, and the sight is so adorable that Cellbit would be smiling like a fool if he weren't so focused on keeping a straight face — which was always hard to maintain when he was around the Mexican. With a sigh, the barrier between them crumbles, and a sweet smile breaks out on Roier's lips.

"Me too."

"What?"

He feels stupid. And open-mouthed.

"I would kill for you." He repeats "Without thinking about it twice."

That's kind of romantic. By Cellbit and Roier's standards, of course. It's like the saying goes: the cure for a madman is a madman and a half, and maybe they were a little — a lot — involved in the chaotic immensity that was loving each other. And for them, it was just enough, no matter how emotional and uncertain all that emotional baggage they carried was.

If possible, they were willing to deal with this — their feelings — in the best way now. In conversation. In a look. In an honest curve of the lips. In a sweet wink. In a soft touch. In fact.

Cellbit barely notices when he feels a brief squeeze on his hand. Roier is holding him, perhaps a little tighter than he would like to show. He realizes that he is not the only one who believes that this is all a dream and that a mere blink of an eye could annihilate all the beautiful things that were happening between them.

So, he squeezes the hand back. Just to assure them both that, yes, this was

real.

"Me gustas tu, you know?"

Ah, Roier would kill him with a heart attack any day now.

"No more than I love you."

But it is good to know that his words also affect him in the same way, judging by the beautiful blush that rises up his neck and cheeks. Roier clears his throat as he leans toward him, half staring at him, half looking away whenever he feels too embarrassed to look at him.

The sunset is at its peak when their lips touch for the first time. From the outside, one would think the Sun took a long time to sleep on purpose. On the other side, in the unconscious, it is likely that the great star was giving its blessing to the couple of lovebirds leaning on that bench on the porch, sighs swallowed by the astonished heat of their now swollen lips.

"Yo..." Roier licks his lips as if they were dry, but the truth is that he does it to recover the lingering taste of Cellbit's mouth on his. "Can we go out… tomorrow?"

Cellbit chokes on his own saliva because, fuck, was that a call for a date? Please, yes.

"Tacos?" he asks shyly.

"Tacos" Roier answers, his cheeks equally hot. "And horchata. It'll be good."

"Anything is good" Cellbit whispers "as long as I'm with you."

It's enough for Roier to get up from the bench. His knees are shaking a little, and he blinks so much it's like his eyes are full of specks. And he's so, so red. It's the most adorable, beautiful thing Cellbit has ever seen. Is it possible to fall in love with someone more and more every day? No, every second?

"We'll meet tomorrow, then."

"Yes…"

Roier sighs and bites his lower lip. He is about to leave for his own house, but he doesn't help but turn around a little to look at him one last time that

day. There are stars above their heads and a slender full moon illuminating their eyes full of love and hope.

"See you, gatinho."

He called me gatinho!

"SEE YOU, GUAPITO!"

Cellbit responds with the excitement of a teenager, but hey, Roier makes him feel like a teenager in love, sighing and freaking out in the corners. It's not bad; on the contrary, it's one of the purest and happiest feelings he's ever felt. And now, he has a date. With Roier. His boyfriend? Fiancé? Hookup?

At this point, it doesn't matter. As long as he has Roier in his arms, everything else will be worth it.

FayeFableIllustrations

A LITTLE (BIT OF) LOVE

Written by A.D

It starts deceptively simple: Cellbit and Roier are taking a walk together through the Favela at sunset, fresh coffees in their hands from Starbobby. Cellbit can't stop staring at Roier. Roier can't stop staring at Cellbit. Bobby is watching from above, probably rolling his eyes at how goofy Roier looks when he's in love.

There are two *creatures* walking a step behind Cellbit and Roier that Cellbit is purposefully ignoring.

Roier's shoe comes untied next to a recently-added flowerbed. Cellbit offers to tie it, Roier laughs and teases Cellbit, Cellbit hands Roier his coffee to hold as he crouches and takes Roier's shoelaces in his hands.

Just barely visible through the gap between Roier's legs, Pulgoier looks blankly up at the flowers. They're taller than it is, but just barely.

?, the disgusting little thing, follows Pulgoier's gaze. And then, horrifyingly, and entirely of its own accord, it reaches up and snaps a flower off at the base of its stem. It holds the flower out to Pulgoier, head ducked just slightly, almost bashfully; Pulgoier doesn't smile, because it can't, because it isn't real, but it does take the flower.

Frozen in abject horror, Cellbit doesn't react as Roier annoyedly taps at his head and asks what's taking so long. Why is he just sitting there, what's wrong?

And then Roier turns around and sees his Mini-Me holding the flower close to its chest and pressing a plastic kiss to ?'s cheek, and Roier gasps.

"Aww, look!" he coos, fingers tangling in Cellbit's hair excitedly. "They're in love!"

And Cellbit feels nothing.

Cellbit's son is gone. So is a significant part of Cellbit's heart, and yet he knows that he is still capable of feeling love. He's alive, after all: he isn't a religious man, but he likes to think that everything with a heart can feel love. Dogs love their owners. Lions love their mates. Crocodiles love the hunt. Parrots love to show off.

The Mini-Mes? Notably not alive. They aren't real. They're plastic and felt and yarn and whatever-the-fuck electronics the Federation shoved into their fake little bodies. Their nerves are made out of copper. Their veins are filled with self-recycling machine oil. Their hearts are combustion engines that run off of the items that their islander counterparts provide them daily.

Cellbit knows this. He's cut his Mini-Me apart so many times that ? knows not to squirm on the dissection table. Every time he's sewn ? back together, he's made ? hold the roll of string so it doesn't roll away. He's made ? bleed oil to the point that he once caught ? drinking gasoline when Cellbit's back was turned.

The Mini-Mes don't feel emotions. They *can't.* They aren't real. They're creatures, if one could call an inhuman amalgamation of wires and eco-friendly microplastics a creature. It's more apt to call them robots.

Monsters.

Cellbit knows that the MIni-Mes were created for war. He watched the video at that conference, he knows *exactly* what the little assholes were made for. Now that they're stolen, their purpose has probably been shifted by the Federation from fighting to spying.

They can't feel love. This much, Cellbit knows. They were created for battle, and now they're just biding their time. *Waiting*.

The fact that ? seems to be in love with Pulgoier is an outlier that should not be considered. They're both just mimicking their owners, that's all. Which begs the question of exactly how adaptive the Mini-Mes *are*; they can change appearance at the drop of a hat, but behavior? They've been robotic up to this

point, what changed?

Cellbit asks this to ? as ? sits in its cage staring at the oil-stained wall.

?, of course, doesn't respond. That's good, Cellbit doesn't know what he'd do if the little bastard learned how to talk.

But, at the lack of a response, Cellbit inexplicably feels a sense of… God, is this *bravery* he's feeling coming off of ?? Is that it? An *attitude*?

Cellbit's eyes narrow, and he leans in closer to the cage with a sneer.

"Whatever you're doing, I'm *onto it,*" he growls.

? just adjusts its goggles in response. Its hand briefly dips into the Fear Room's light, exposing a thin black line drawn around ?'s left hand ring finger. A ring.

Cellbit is so surprised that he doesn't even feel angry for a good moment.

But then ? looks up at him as if asking, *"And what about it?"*, and Cellbit finds himself standing and kicking the cage so hard that it falls over, sending ? toppling.

A *ring*. A goddamn *ring.*

A goddamn *mockery*, more like. It's mocking him. The *Federation* is mocking him, he knows it. He fucking *knows* it.

(But… why?)

Pulgoier starts holding ?'s hand. ? keeps picking things off of the side of the road to give to Pulgoier, and Cellbit hates it.

Roier makes a little shoebox bed for them that he puts under his and Cellbit's own bed. Instead of powering off for the day in a corner of the room, ? and Pulgoier go there at night, and Cellbit hates it.

? and Pulgoier sit across from each other on the floor when their owners have their meals. Sometimes they pretend to eat, usually pretending to feed each other, and Cellbit hates it.

Richarlyson would have killed them by now. Cellbit wishes he was here to do so, but.

But.

But it's well past midnight, and Cellbit can't sleep. This isn't anything too unusual; he learned how to live off minimal sleep back during the War, for better or for worse.

But *Roier* can't sleep, which means that he's somewhere in the castle, which means that Cellbit is somewhere in the castle because there's no way in Hell he's letting his depressed and sleep-deprived husband wander around mourning.

Tonight's *'somewhere'* is the garden, and Cellbit has Roier in his arms as they sway back and forth to the music playing softly on Roier's communicator. (The Federation is *shitty* for so many reasons, but at least it's providing the island with Spotify Premium free-of-charge.)

The song is unimportant. So are the two little freaks of nature watching from beneath a rosebush. So are the Federation's hidden cameras, and Bad somewhere downstairs trying to carry Cellbit's dining table out the door, and the itching bloodlust in the back of Cellbit's brain.

What *is* important is Roier, and so Cellbit focuses all his attention on him.

He's tired, clearly so: his hair is more of a mess than usual, his clothes are rumpled and wrinkled, his shoes are untied, his bandana is lost somewhere in the bedroom, his lips are chapped, and the circles under his eyes are dark enough to rival Cellbit's.

Cellbit doesn't think he's ever seen a more beautiful man in his *life*.

He says as much, words ghosting across Roier's pale lips.

Roier smiles weakly, and he murmurs a quiet, *"No, you."*

The song changes to something a bit quicker. They both ignore the change in tempo and decide to follow each other's, instead.

Cellbit's arms tighten around Roier. He pulls him closer, nose burying itself in the side of Roier's neck and breathing in his scent and internalizing it, filing it away in the little cabinet in his brain labeled *'Roier.'*

"You stink," he grumbles.

"Yeah, because you're all over me," Roier responds. He lightly pinches Cellbit's side. "I know what we're doing when we get back inside."

Cellbit whines, sagging in Roier's arms. He loves his husband, but he does not love showering with him; Roier takes so long under the water that it's running cold by the time it's Cellbit's turn, and his shampoo smells so strongly that it makes Cellbit have an asthma attack.

Cellbit doesn't even *have* asthma!

What Cellbit does have is an unfortunately-acute sense of hearing. It's a blessing at times, and it's a curse.

His eyebrow twitches in annoyance as he hears the absolute faintest of sounds: the crunching of grass beneath clumsy feet, and the overworking of machinery as it tries to figure out how to laugh.

At the same time, Roier gasps, *"Mira, mira!"*

But Cellbit doesn't look. Why should he? He's having a good time. He doesn't need some… some… some things ruining it.

"Ay," Roier insists, poking Cellbit between his ribs once. "Gatinho, mira."

Another poke. "Mira."

Another poke. "Cellbit."

(Poke.) *"Cellbo."*

Cellbit's eyes squeeze shut. He presses a kiss to the crook of Roier's neck to try and appease him, but Roier just pokes him again. With *determination*.

"Stop ignoring me!" he huffs. "Unless… you hate me? You want a divorce?"

At that, Cellbit's head snaps up in a panic.

"Não!" he shouts. Why would Roier ever…

Lips twitching into a semblance of a smile, Roier grabs Cellbit's face with one hand- squeezing his cheeks together and making him feel a bit like a fish- and turns it to the side.

…right. If there's one thing Roier is, it's a *fucking asshole.* (And a handsome one at that.)

Cellbit's shoulders sag in relief, but said relief quickly melts back into annoyance as he's forced to look at the Mini-Mes and their… well. It *isn't* dancing, that's for certain.

Pulgoier has taken the lead, just like Roier has. It's holding ?'s little hands and rocking from side-to-side: left, right. *Left, right.* Left, right. It doesn't move from its spot other than a small amount of shuffling as it tries pulling at ?'s hands in an attempt to get it to actually move.

? is still. It's staring directly into Pulgoier's beady little eyes, absolutely frozen. If it could blush, Cellbit is sure that it would be doing so.

Cellbit inadvertently copies it, stiffening against Roier's body and stopping any and all movements. He doesn't mean to- he wants to keep dancing, to keep ignoring the Mini-Mes and their bastardized attempt at "romance", but…

"Look," Roier quietly says, sounding almost awed.

He lets go of Cellbit's face so he can press his cheek against Cellbit's.

Cellbit feels Roier's jaw work against his as he concludes, *"It's us."*

Because… it is. It *is*, somehow, in such a fundamental way that Cellbit can't really identify it as anything but *Cellbit-And-Roier.*

"Oh," says Cellbit, voice hardly above a whisper.

He watches as Pulgoier tugs on ?'s arms, and as ?'s legs start to shake under it.

Cellbit doesn't actually remember a lot of his wedding reception; between the explosions and the alcohol, it's all just a lot of blurry faces and the feeling

of *Roier-Roier-Roier-Roier-Roier.*

What he does remember is being ushered into the center of the dance floor along with Roier and freezing. The world faded from around him, and all he could think about was Roier's smile as he took Cellbit into his arms; Roier's warm hands on his body; Roier's alcohol-laced breath across his face. His body was a stranger.

He remembers thinking, *'Shit. I don't know how to dance.'* Because he didn't, and he still doesn't, because he never had a chance to learn how. It just never came up in his life, and then, suddenly, he was supposed to dance. At his wedding. In front of the entire island. And everyone he knew.

And he remembers the way Roier's face softened as he picked up on Cellbit's anxiety. His hands slid from Cellbit's back, up to his shoulders, down the lengths of his arms, and to his hands. He tangled their fingers together, took a step back, and winked.

Pulgoier physically can't wink, but it otherwise does exactly what Roier did all those months ago: it takes a step back, and it just starts spinning.

? can't shout like Cellbit did back then, but it otherwise does what he did all those months ago: it gets pulled along, forced to spin along with its partner, stumbling over its own feet and flailing about like a doll caught in the wind.

"I can't fucking believe this," Cellbit mutters.

"I can," Roier replies. "He's your Mini-Me, of course he can't dance for shit."

He yelps out a laugh as Cellbit indignantly steps on his foot.

Roier's right, though; Cellbit can't dance for shit. And neither can ?, being Cellbit's shitty little clone.

The night of the wedding, it took Cellbit a good solid minute to get his feet back under him. He felt himself smiling, and, maybe it was the wine in his system, but he found himself tugging Roier in a spin in the opposite direction. He was dizzy as Hell, but it made Roier laugh when he did it, so he just… kept doing it. Eventually, the spin led into a proper attempt at a slow dance that failed so miserably that the two of them gave up and jumped onto the stage for another round of karaoke.

Tonight, ? picks up on things a bit quicker than Cellbit had. It stabilizes, nods to itself, and starts pulling Pulgoier into its own spin. Almost immediately, they're attempting a proper waltz, and Cellbit…

Cellbit doesn't get it.

At first, Cellbit wasn't sure what the end goal of the Mini-Mes was. Then, he realized that they're little soldiers. Robotic supersoldiers capable of self-multiplication and growth, literal war machines.

But then… why do they look like the islanders? Why does Pulgoier have the same dark circles as Roier? Why does ? have the same scar across its chest that Cellbit does? What's the point? The Federation doesn't do anything without a purpose, so why do the Mini-Mes have to look like their owners if they're meant to grow up and kill them?

Why can they dance?

"What's the point?" he murmurs. Roier hums in acknowledgement, and Cellbit takes that as a sign to continue: "Of copying us?"

"Because we're sexy," Roier responds.

Cellbit rolls his eyes. "True. *But,* think about it, what purpose does any of…" (He waves his hand in the MIni-Mes' general direction.) *"...this serve?"*

"I don't know, but… *look at them."*

Cellbit looks. He doesn't understand. Something uncomfortable rises in his throat.

? twirls Pulgoier, leading it into a dip. Pulgoier raises its head and presses its painted mouth against ?'s.

Chest clenching, Cellbit tries to tear his eyes away, but he just… *can't.* He can't. Not when they're right there, not when they're-

"You think they're learning from us, right?" Roier asks. "So… maybe they aren't learning how to kill us. Maybe they're learning to be us."

Cellbit gives him a flat look. "Isn't that just as bad?"

Roier shrugs, still watching the little monsters.

"Maybe," he replies. "I'm not a scientist. But… isn't it kinda crazy that we

taught robots how to love?"

But robots can't love. They can't. But.

Roier's arms tighten around Cellbit's body. His smile is just as forced as it has been since the eggs all vanished, but his eyes are surprisingly soft as he watches the Mini-Mes tumble into the grass from the force of their silent, impossible laughter.

"They're just copying us," Cellbit weakly says. "It isn't actually real."

"Maybe," Roier hums. One hand travels up to cup the back of Cellbit's head, gently pulling it against his chest. Cellbit listens to Roier's heartbeat and wills his own heart to match its pace.

"Or," he continues, "maybe it is. We found our reasons. Maybe they found theirs."

They watch the Mini-Mes, and the Mini-Mes don't notice.

The song changes, and Roier starts leading Cellbit into another dance.

Cellbit's eyes slip shut, and he lets himself get swept away by Roier's movements.

(Bagi would call Cellbit a monster, but Cellbit found love in the end. So maybe, just maybe, ? could have done the same.)

Amor de Chocolate

Written by Dove, translated by Ámbar

Cellbit usually stays up all night researching or writing in his journal, keeping his mind occupied with work and everything going on around him.

However, this night was an exception, because he couldn't stop thinking about something completely different that time... He was thinking about *Valentine's Day.*

Throughout all the years of his life, he never cared about that date; sometimes he completely forgot about it, but that year would be his first Valentine's Day *with Roier.*

His lover. His husband.

And the normal thing would be to have a plan to celebrate, a dinner, a date, something special.

But Cellbit *had nothing.*

It wasn't his fault. After all, he never cared about having a special person to spend that day with, even to the point of despising it. However, since he married Roier many things changed; he has found happiness in such simple

details he didn't even see before.

Something as simple as being by his side in complete silence was enough to calm his heart. That's why more than ever he wanted to make an effort to do something, and that's where his mission began.

"Can you concentrate, Bagi?" Cellbit frowned with a bit of stress.

At 2 pm, he called his sister for some advice, as she was now in a relationship with Tina. He thought she could help.

"Pfff… I'm sorry. I've just never seen you so nervous about something like this."

Cellbit felt his cheeks burn as he held the phone close to ear.

"I know! But I really need help to prepare something special for Roier."

The blue-eyed boy began to pace around the room, hidden in his research room while Roier was in charge of feeding their children upstairs.

"Have you thought about buying him anything? I don't know… Clothes?" Bagi asked calmly while holding a cup of tea in her left hand.

"I thought about it, but then I went to look at his closet and it's completely full. He's the one who has the most clothes on this island!" Cellbit sighed, feeling a pain in his head, he hadn't imagined preparing a simple gift was going to be so difficult.

"Okay, okay, calm down…" Bagi smiled slightly, changing the tone of voice to a softer one. "Cellbit, listen, I know you're too worried cause it's your first Valentine's Day with Roier, but sometimes the simple details are enough. Why don't you just spend time with him? Take a walk and talk, stuff like that."

Cellbit fell silent, staring intently at the painting stuck on the wall.

It was a painting of him, painted by none other than his husband.

He had always made it his mission to make him feel loved, even when there was little in him that he believed was lovable.

He couldn't hide it; he felt scared, insecure. Roier was perfect, he was everything he could ask for and more, so the simple idea of not being able to return all the love he gave him made him nervous.

"I'm scared, Bagi…" Cellbit whispered, breaking the silence. "Scared I won't be enough for him. I did horrible things before and I know the person I once was is still inside me, hidden, waiting to come out… So I need to do this right. I need to make sure I'm the perfect husband."

Bagi felt a little sad hearing her brother speak so badly of him, but she also understood he must have been through a lot to believe that kind of thing, and more importantly, knows what she said wouldn't carry much weight unlike, precisely, Roier.

"I understand… Then, you could do various things for him if none of the ideas convince you." Bagi paused for a second before continuing. "Just remember no matter what you decide, Roier will be amazed by the simple fact it was planned by you."

A slight smile appeared on his face, just imagining his handsome husband happy about a gift somehow gave him more energy.

In the end, he just wanted to be a good person for him.

A few minutes passed and Cellbit finally decided to leave, finding Roier cleaning the table.

"Finally! You missed lunch, so you'll have to serve yourself something," said the mexican while clearing the plates.

"Sorry for the delay… The call took longer than I expected." Cellbit approached so unsteadily he looked like a newborn cat.

"And what did you talk about with Bagi? Everything okay?" That question made his skin crawl with nerves.

"Oh, we just talk about what's been going on in our lives and stuff… You know her anniversary with Tina is in two weeks?" The tone of his voice was fake, it seemed like he was forcing a smile and failing miserably.

Roier noticed this, of course, because he knew that whenever his husband got nervous, he ended up talking too much and too fast.

"Sure… I'm happy for them" he was overly suspicious for a second before shrugging and forgetting about the subject "By the way, since you're free…"

He carefully dried the hands with a kitchen towel and walked up to the

blue-eyed boy, looking at him with a flirtatious smile.

"Come with me and the kids on an adventure. Pepito saw a picture of a rare animal in our album and said he really wanted to see one in person, so we're taking him on a ride."

As he spoke he placed both of his hands on Cellbit's shoulders, slowly stroking him over the green jacket he was wearing.

Cellbit's labored breathing quickly became noticeable.

He looked into his husband's eyes and knew how much he wanted to say "yes", after all it was his duty to fulfill all the whims of his children and husband.

But then Cellbit glanced at the kitchen, remembering perfectly his plan and everything he had to do to surprise the mexican. He bit his tongue and moved away from Roier, putting distance between them.

"I'm sorry, guapito, I can't go right now. But I hope you guys have fun!" And as quickly as he said, he turned around and started walking towards his room.

Roier stood there, motionless. His mind was a little confused, he had been sure the answer would be positive but he was too surprised to hear him say "no" so coldly and turn away. Cellbit was not like that.

His heart trembled a little, but he preferred to keep it to himself for now. Roier wanted to think it really wasn't going to mean anything. Maybe Cellbit was just too busy for them at the moment.

Everything was fine.

Shortly after, the children said goodbye to their father and together with Roier they left the castle, leaving Cellbit completely behind. It was then he began his mission to "Prepare the best gift for his husband".

He quickly grabbed everything he thought he needed to get started on his first idea: making a letter.

Everyone loved love letters and after a little research on his computer, it was very popular nowadays to give letters on a special date like that.

And, it seemed like a simple thing at first, just putting a couple of words

that express his love for Roier and how happy he is by his side. Of course, Cellbit didn't think it would be that hard to describe his own feelings.

At first, he wanted to do a review of their entire relationship, recounting all the events who made him fall in love with Roier, telling everything from his perspective, but then he thought that would be boring to read, so he discarded it.

And started a new one, a letter telling everything he liked about Roier, what he appreciated most about him: his generosity, his beauty, his kindness, his laughter, his wit, his strength. But that didn't sound convincing either, because he thought it would be too simple to give.

He wanted to write him a poem, a special only dedicated to him… But Cellbit didn't know how to write poems.

The hours passed and without realizing it, he had already had seven failed attempts.

Nothing seemed perfect. Nothing seemed to fully express all he felt for Roier, because he was unique, everything Cellbit needed and everything he could ask for and more.

Roier saved him, even without realizing it. He gave color to his life, filled him with energy and light, like a sun that feeds flowers in spring.

Roier was as necessary for Cellbit as oxygen.

Expressing that was something Cellbit couldn't do, because sometimes he was also surprised by his feelings towards him.

And, Cellbit was ready to try again, but then a knock on the door caught his attention. Quick as a whirlwind, he grabbed all the papers and stuffed them into the desk drawer.

"Come in!" he shouted as he straightened his clothes, hoping to look as natural as possible.

The door opened and a little boy with glasses entered taking small, slow steps.

"What's wrong, Pepito?" The Brazilian's heart calmed down a little when he saw his son.

"Pa Roier says dinner will be ready soon for you to go".

"Oh… Sure, let's go now" the blue-eyed man slowly got up from his seat and walked towards the boy, giving him his hand as they both left the room.

Cellbit found it a little strange Roier had not come to the office to tell him they had arrived. Also, he was so focused he didn't notice what time it was.

During dinner, Cellbit listened to the stories of their adventure, hearing how Pepito fell several times along the way and how he was distracted by the flowers. It seemed them had a good time as a family, something that really makes him happy. He wanted to see them laugh all the time…

At least, compared to their day, they did have a moment of peace.

Cellbit was very anxious and felt pathetic for the simple fact of being scared of a day that hadn't seemed important before.

When the children finished eating, both parents took them to their respective rooms, making sure the children fell asleep without any problems.

Roier sighed after closing the door to Pepito's room, realizing his body was now really tired from the day he had. All he wanted at that moment was to lie in their bed with his husband, cuddling under the sheets while whispering how much they loved each other.

And, Roier was convinced that was what he would do, but upon entering his room he realized Cellbit was not there.

He quickly went down the stairs, watching as the blue-eyed man walked back to his office.

"Cellbo!" exclaimed the brown-haired boy.

His whole body trembled when he heard his name, and as he turned around his face expressed nervousness and anxiety.

"What's up, guapito?" he asked the question and Roier finally stopped in front of him.

"You're still going to work? Why are you leaving now? It's already night and I thought that… Since we haven't been able to spend much time together recently, then at least we could rest in our room, don't you think?"

Roier's cheeks turned red just from saying something as cheesy as that, but seriously it was what he wanted most at that moment.

"I'm sorry, guapito…" the Brazilian looked down, focusing on a book he had in hand. "Now I need to do something alone, but I'll try to be quick. When I'm done, I'll go up with you."

Roier felt his heart stop as he watched Cellbit turn around and walk away from him.

That had NEVER happened before, Cellbit never refused him anything, never asked to be alone. Even in the most important investigations, he always invited him to participate and asked for his opinion, so he never heard him say anything like that.

Before he could say anything, Cellbit was already out of sight, leaving him in the middle of the room with his head full of questions.

On the other hand, Cellbit was too focused on his mission. Not that he didn't want to spend time with Roier, not at all, that was what he enjoyed most in the world, but if he wanted to be able to give him a gift, he had to put all his mind and effort into it.

Cellbit spent most of his night reading a cookbook, figuring out what would be best to make for him. He also looked for baking videos and took notes; he had to learn everything so tomorrow he could prepare a perfect cake for Roier.

Finally, it was 3am when he decided it was best to rest so he could be ready tomorrow.

The big day…

The truth is had trouble sleeping, so he kept looking at Roier's face until his eyes could no longer stand to stay open. It was time to rest.

And then at dawn he woke up frightened, thinking he had slept longer than usual. He quickly changed his clothes and went downstairs to the dining room. Everything was so quiet, strangely quiet.

He searched everywhere, checked the rooms.

Nobody was home.

At first it seemed strange to him, since he didn't know if Roier had plans for today, but a part of him was grateful he was alone, so he could prepare the surprise for when Roier returned.

And he got to work.

Cellbit put on a kitchen apron and quickly prepared his notes and recipe to start baking. He would make a chocolate cake with strawberries.

At first he thought it would be easy, believing he just had to follow each noted step, but the more he advanced, the more he began to get lost among so many ingredients.

He had never baked anything before, not even cookies, so this was his first time doing something like this, which would explain why quickly made a mess. It was very difficult to keep everything clean when he had to concentrate on the cake and finish it on time.

Finally, after hours of work, he had achieved it.

He had to decorate it a little too carefully and made a couple of mistakes in the process, but the result didn't look that bad actually. It even looked delicious.

Now he just had to wait.

One, two, three, four hours passed.

Finally, five o'clock came and he received no message from Roier.

Cellbit even had to keep the cake in the refrigerator so it wouldn't go bad from waiting so long. And, when the Brazilian was falling asleep at the table due to exhaustion, a noise surprised him.

Roier had arrived, alone.

"Guapito, you're finally here!" Cellbit exclaimed as he stood up to approach him.

But then he stopped when he saw the brunette's frown.

It was very difficult to see Roier angry, he had always been a very patient and calm person, but now it seemed that he was not at his best.

"Something happened?" the Brazilian asked as he stood up.

Roier just avoided his gaze and began to walk around the table, ready to go to his room.

That put all his senses on alert.

"Guapito, you okay? What happened?" Cellbit followed him up the stairs to try to talk to him. They both reached the room and Roier stopped, crossing his arms.

"Oh, I don't know. So tell me, has something happened you haven't told me?" The brunette turned around, looking at him with a frown.

That question made Cellbit's body tense.

Was he angry with him? Had he done something wrong? His fingers began to tremble a little at the thought, so his gaze became filled with fear.

Roier noticed this and sighed, feeling stressed.

"You seriously not gonna say anything about how weird you acted?"

"I… I don't get the point," the Brazilian whispered, trying to remember everything he has done in the last few days.

Roier sat on the edge of the bed, covering his face with both hands and letting out a long sigh before speaking again.

"Yesterday Pepito was a little sad cause you didn't go with us… He has been waiting for you to take him for a walk to the amaranth garden you mentioned to him weeks ago."

Hearing that made Cellbit's weak heart break, he had completely forgotten about that.

"And I… Well, I guess it's obvious, isn't it?" Roier turned to look at him, smiling with some sadness in his eyes "You never told me you needed to be alone, cause ever since we came back from… That place," his voice trembled a little as he remembered the horrible bloody island they were on a few months ago, Purgatory. "We've always worked together," he finished the sentence, sighing as he realized how very sensitive he was at that moment.

He quickly stood up again, forcing a smile and approaching him.

"Anyway! It doesn't matter, it's not a big deal, I have to make dinner." His

voice returned to normal, as if what happened a few moments ago hadn't happened.

And that scared Cellbit.

He wanted to slap himself, for the simple fact of having forgotten such an important promise as the one he made to Pepito and also for having made his husband feel bad without meaning to, but he knew the best way to solve it was to talk to him.

He quickly walked over to Roier and took his wrist, looking at him with a slight smile.

"Follow me".

And Roier couldn't say no.

Within seconds, they had both arrived at their research room. The Mexican was sitting at Cellbit's desk, not knowing exactly what he was waiting for.

The Brazilian asked him to wait there while he went to get something upstairs, so he did, silently looking around trying to remember when was the last time he went in there. After a few minutes he heard Cellbit's footsteps, and then he saw him enter the room.

He was carrying a big cake in hands.

Roier eyes widened in surprise, watching as Cellbit walked over to him and placed the cake on the table.

"Cellbit? What is this…?" he couldn't finish the sentence.

"Wait! There's something else," Cellbit interrupted, then went to some drawers and searched for something.

All the letters he had written before, all the poems and words of love he had saved for him. *Cellbit gave it all to Roier.*

Roier held several sheets of paper in hands, completely perplexed and confused.

"Guapito, I need you to listen to me." Cellbit stood in front of him, placing a hand on his chest, right where his heart was.

Roier didn't say anything, he just looked at him in silence.

"I think it's already pretty obvious you're the first person who's made me feel this happiness in my entire life. I'd never been in love before, so I'd never been afraid of not being enough… You've taught me so many things. You've made me see a version of myself I didn't know before, one who wants to live a life with a family and, well, spend all my years with the ones I love."

Roier's beautiful brown eyes sparkled as he looked directly at him, and even though it couldn't be seen, his pupils dilated as if he was looking at the most beautiful person on earth, which was partly true.

"What I mean is… Te amo."

Roier felt all his thoughts evaporate, repeating only that phrase in the depths of his mind.

"Happy Valentine's Day".

After that, the last thing Cellbit remembers was Roier getting up and throwing himself into his arms to cover his face with kisses, completely ignoring the cake, because his love was already sweet enough for him. After that, they both talked, and Cellbit confessed everythin was happening, how he had been scared because it was his first Valentine's Day with him, and how he didn't want to ruin it, but in the end, if they were together then nothing could go wrong.

What is
Love?
comfymoth

From My Heart

Written by Bonnie

"What is love?"

Cellbit raised an eyebrow as he glanced at Felps, who was sitting on his bed with his knees to his chest.

"Huh? Why are you asking this *now?"*

With a light grunt, Felps shrugged. "Well, you haven't said anything for the past two hours now, and if I spend another second in my own thoughts, I think I'll go crazy."

Fair enough. Cellbit stopped counting the seconds long ago and lost track of how many days he and Felps have been stuck in this glass cage. Had he really been staring through the glass, and at the dark hallways below, for two hours now?

He pondered for a moment. What is love? It sounded simple enough, but Cellbit couldn't think of an answer.

Cellbit saw the brightness of his white clothes in his reflection. He frowned and looked away. "Does it matter?"

"Of course it does. Humans were made to love and you're human too, whether you think so or not."

Cellbit raised an eyebrow at his best friend. "Since when did you get so sentimental?"

"Probably after Cucurucho snatched me from the island and dunked me into one of their underground labs," He scratched at his white pants. "Or maybe after you showed up with that white streak. Can't tell."

At the mention of said streak, the detective reached for his hair and rubbed the white strands between his fingers. A part of him hoped the color would fade out like chalk. Another part told him it never would.

Since Felps was gazing at him with more anticipation than he's ever had the past few days, Cellbit decided to actually think about his question seriously.

Love. What is love? Images flashed through his head. He saw the wastelands, and felt a demon's hand ruffle his hair. He saw the cold bars of a prison, and could taste fresh blood on his tongue. He saw the beautiful blue flowers of a field, and the toothy grin of a little dragon child. He saw big brown eyes and a soft smile.

Plucking one of his white hair strands, Cellbit stared at it and watched it glow against his skin. Just as he opened his mouth to respond, he was cut off by Felps screaming: "Look, they're here! They found us!"

What?

Cellbit could hear his heart beating in his chest as he turned around and saw a crowd start to pour into the previously dark and silent hallways. There was immediate chaos, with screams ringing and blades clashing.

And then the sticky portion of a grappling squok flew towards the glass and stuck onto it, before a voice started screaming from out of his view.

"Cellbo! Cellbo! Cellbo!"

Without thinking, Cellbit pressed his palms against the glass and screamed back. *"Aqui!"*

Roier's head peaked from underneath, and for a second Cellbit saw those sparkling brown eyes he'd grown to adore, until the squok slipped and the Mexican ended up falling to the ground.

Initially filled with worry, Cellbit relaxed when he spotted Roier's figure on the ground. It was easy to spot him in the crowd. How could he not, when he was as radiant as the sun, his rays piercing through the darkest of nights?

Roier yelled as he cut through the mobs, their blood painting his sword and clothes red. His eyes, usually bright with life and beaming with happiness, had a tint of red in them. They burned with fury and rage and something unspeakable.

And then Cellbit felt a rush, as all his previous feelings of hopelessness and dread after going through all those damn tests every single day finally flushed out of his system.

Because they were here. *Roier* was here.

Finding his voice again, Cellbit screamed at the top of his lungs. *"Guapito!"*

Roier sliced a zombie in half with his sword, and yelled as he dodged a skeleton's arrow. *"Gatinho, voy por ti!"*

Maybe there was hope after all.

Rescuing them came with many challenges, but eventually the group was able to dig a hole through the ceiling of their glass box and they were able to climb to the surface. Cellbit pulled himself out of the dirt, closed his eyes and felt the sunlight on his face. He took a deep breath. The air was crisp with the smell of crops and leaves.

With how much torture he'd suffered on this damn island, Cellbit never thought he would be so happy to see it in all its glory.

One thing led to another, and now they were messing around in the Favela. In the midst of the celebration, Cellbit never got to change out of his clothes. They were strikingly white, a grave reminder of all the suffering he'd endured in the hands of the Federation. He didn't like how much he resembled that fucking white bear.

But he didn't have the heart to just leave while everyone was celebrating his and Felps' return, so Cellbit decided to deal with it a little longer. Besides, Roier was also wearing a completely different outfit. Instead of his usual red Spider-Man hoodie and jeans combo, the Mexican was wearing clothes that looked like an extension of Vegetta's usual fit. It made Cellbit wonder what exactly happened during his absence, but he knew it wasn't time for that.

Most of the people ended up dispersing after the big rescue mission, and Cellbit found himself in a small group of people that consisted of; Pierre, Foolish, Leonarda, Richarlyson, Felps, Roier and Cellbit himself. They were messing around the patio area by the wall that used to split the island into two areas.

At one point in their nonsensical conversations, Richarlyson put down a sign. Of course, while the others carried on with their talking, Cellbit hovered around his son, awaiting his words. Eventually, Richarlyson stepped away from the sign, and showed everyone what he wanted to say.

Pai o titio roier e vc vão se casar :D

Cellbit choked on his own spit, then exclaimed. "*O que?* What do you mean we're getting married?! Calm down!"

His words caught Roier's attention.

"Como?" yelled the Mexican, who sounded more amused by Richarlyson's antics than anything.

The Brazilian egg quickly placed down another sign, which said: *foi decidido 2 dias atras.*

Because Richarlyson was a walking egg, he had no face. Cellbit, however, could just see the mischievous grin hiding behind that shell.

Honestly, he loved Richarlyson with every fiber of his being, but sometimes he had no idea what the little egg was talking about—because two days ago, Cellbit was locked in the Federation's basement, and became victim to whatever it is they did to him down there. Experiments? Brainwashing? He had no idea, but it was enough to create a white streak in his brown hair.

Back to the problem at hand, Cellbit laughed dryly at his egg son's words. Shaking his head, he waved his hands around. "Okay, but who even decided this?

His question was answered by dead silence from Richarlyson. Somehow, Cellbit just knew.

"You weren't here," Felps pointed out with a raised finger. The smirk on his face was almost equivalent to Richarlyson's hypothetical expression. "But, it looks like you're getting married, hm?"

Cellbit glared at him, before he sighed. "I don't know, this is—"

Of course, the most important opinion was not only his, but also the other half of the apparently engaged couple. Roier stood there with a big smile on his face as he laughed at the way Richarlyson hopped around his signs. For some reason, he didn't look as bothered by the idea as he should.

Still, Cellbit would rather have Cucurucho run a chainsaw through his body again than have Roier feel any sort of discomfort, so he had to set things straight with him.

At that moment, a flood of emotions rushed into Cellbit. Although all the islanders celebrated the successful rescue of two of their own, the Brazilian himself never had the chance to commemorate his own personal victories; that was, finally reuniting with his son Richarlyson and his… *Guapito*, Roier.

Seeing Roier in the flesh, all smiley and flushed as he laughed heartily, made Cellbit realize that his absence had punctured a hole in his chest, piercing through his heart and bleeding him dry. It was a certain kind of emptiness that made him ache, as if he'd been stripped of everything and was nothing but a shell of the man he used to be.

Maybe being held captive by the Federation did have its effects, because not even the constant dreams of hearing Roier's voice could rid him of his ache.

At the same time, it was the thought of meeting his Guapito again that kept Cellbit sane.

Roier was here now, after slaying dozens of beasts in his name, so Cellbit had to thank him somehow. After all, he was the only person who trusted him prior to the kidnapping and was the sole reason why he hadn't fully lost his mind during the infiltration. *How come he hadn't thanked the Mexican for everything yet? Was he an idiot?*

Opening his mouth to speak, fully intent on gushing his thanks, Cellbit's mind was a mess of thoughts, and he ended up saying: "Let's get married?"

Naturally, Roier shot him a wide-eyed look. "Huh?"

Well, shit. Good fucking job, Cellbit. You've just ruined everything, look at how uncomfortable Roier is right now.

In the background, Foolish wore a big grin as he yelled. "Too late, you

already proposed!"

After a brief catch up on the events that transpired on the island during his absence, Cellbit was now aware of Foolish and Vegetta adopting Roier as their son—which meant Foolish was now Roier's father and a potential in-law. *Wait, what?* Scrap that off. He was getting too ahead of himself.

Foolish teasing about the potential marriage of his adoptive son was a thoughtless action that was unsurprising for his character. Still, did that mean approval? In a hypothetical situation where Cellbit really did ask Roier for his hand in marriage, would he easily earn his family's acceptance?

Okay, *why* was he even thinking about this? It was all a misunderstanding, rooted from a sick prank led by Richarlyson. He was going to have to teach his son about the importance of boundaries later.

First, he had to clear things up with Roier first. Before he could say anything, however, his train of thought was interrupted when the Mexican exclaimed loudly.

"Wait!" Raising his hand, Roier puffed one of his cheeks and pointed at his finger. "I don't have a ring on my finger, see?"

Roier's words halted the chaotic conversations around them, and suddenly the entire area was doused in dead silence. Nobody said a word for a long while, until Richarlyson used his tiny little arms to reach for the backpack slung behind his egg body and started rummaging inside it.

Eventually, Richarlyson pulled out a diamond and tossed it towards Roier, who easily caught the gem in his hands, thanks to his spider senses. He squinted his eyes and raised the diamond against the light. After a long while of examining it, he hummed.

"No, no, this is a diamond," Roier shook his head in disapproval, but slipped it in his pocket.

Realizing that Roier was probably playing along with the prank, Cellbit started going through some of his things, in search of a makeshift ring, and so did everyone else. At one point, someone suggested using a donut instead.

It was a ridiculous idea, so Roier ended up laughing at the suggestion. "Hey, why don't we tell Quackity to send us some crafting recipes? And then

we'll be able to make some actual rings, right, Cellbo?"

Weird. It almost sounded like Roier wasn't joking, and that he was actually considering the idea of marrying Cellbit—which was ridiculous. Why would the sun want to be with the moon? Why would someone who only knew kindness want to be tied to someone who lived with violence his own life?

Before Cellbit infiltrated the Federation, Roier was the only person who heard him out. He was the one person who knew of his plan and, based on how everyone interacted with him, it was obvious that nobody knew before his letters were found.

Why would Roier trust him so much? Maybe it was because he promised to bring Bobby back? That made sense, but he'd also failed to fulfill his promise. And yet here Roier was, joking around with the prospect of marriage.

Cellbit's thoughts were all over the place. Once again, he was reminded of Felps' burning question: What is love?

Love is patience. It was Roier's companionship, then promising that he would wait for Cellbit's return after he was told that he needed time.

Love is kind. It was Roier offering his kindness, despite the entire island deeming him a villain.

It does not rejoice at wrongdoing. It was Cellbit living through the darkest days of his life under the Federation's watch, with the thoughts of returning to Roier and receiving the companionship he promised that kept him sane.

But rejoices with the truth.

Something bloomed inside Cellbit, hugging his chest in a warm embrace. It was a feeling he never thought he'd know. With his heart in his mind and his thoughts scattered, he blurted it all out.

"Do you want to get married?"

Roier stared at him. For a fleeting moment, Cellbit considered rejection. What if this was all a one-sided thing? What if the Mexican was just being kind?

His doubts were crushed when his *Guapito* smiled at him with flushed cheeks and said: "Okay."

Cheers erupted from the crowd. Richarlyson launched fireworks into the air. Somehow, a date, time and venue for the wedding was already decided. In the midst of their celebration, Cellbit and Roier held hands. It was something they've done time and time again, but felt different this time around.

When Roier was dropped off at his house, the full moon was shining brightly in the night sky. As they walked the streets to the Favela, Cellbit turned to Felps, who was looking up and was taking in the view of the stars.

"It's Roier."

Felps blinked, then faced him with a raised brow. "Huh?"

"Back in the box, you asked me what love is," Cellbit tilted his head up, and discovered that there were barely any stars to form constellations. "It's Roier. Everything he is, and everything he will be as my husband… That's what love is, isn't it?"

He received silence, until Felps frowned at him. "That's sweet and all, but when did I ask that?"

Cellbit was at first baffled, until he recounted the dead look in Felps' eyes and laughed.

"It's nothing."

With the passing of time, Cellbit would learn the feeling of raw love and bitter heartache, but at the end of it all, he had Roier by his side.

And really, that was more than enough.

HeroDZN

Devaneio

Written by Nan, translated by Yuu Chida

Roier could not believe his own eyes. The words written on that letter that seemed about to swallow him at any moment were a bit too much to digest. When he woke up, he had a feeling that something was wrong, but decided not to think about it and spend the day dressing up as his idol and adoptive father, wanting to ignore the bitterness in his mouth brought by that atypical morning. Everything was going well, in his honest opinion.

Until he was informed that Cellbit had been taken by the Federation, and that there was a letter addressed to him amongst the other letters dedicated to those important to the investigator.

The man tried not to be consumed by the butterflies in his stomach when learning that he was special to the Brazilian he'd craved for so long, especially because the revelation came with the news that Roier might've very well have lost Cellbit before ever having him, and he did not know how to deal with that possibility. No, it couldn't be. He was being patient and giving Cellbit his own time because he saw it was necessary, even more so after everything that started happening and the plan the investigator drew to try to fight against the Federation. Roier wondered many times throughout his grieving if it would be wrong to accept Cellbit's invitation to go to him whenever he felt lonely, if he would be bothering him, if he would be a burden. The feeling of worry was inevitable after the many bitter experiences with the friendships and even the crushes he had on that island, so he did nothing but to offer Cellbit support in the way he could in the middle of the hurricane of pain and despair he had been going through ever since Bobby was torn from his life.

And now, while reading the words Cellbit left on that letter, all that Roier could feel was regret for having wasted precious time, especially since the letter made it clear that his feelings were not as one-sided as he had thought.

Roier felt his eyes drown in tears when he read that sentence. It was not an "I love you" nor an "I want you", but it definitely carried the weight of those powerful words said in a much more significant way to a man that, until a few days ago, knew nothing but solitude.

"I wish I could've been that someone you needed to not be alone anymore."

Roier wanted to scream. What kind of a bad joke was that? First they take away his son, after making both him and Jaiden fools by giving them hope that they would have Bobby back, and now they take away the only person that was keeping him relatively sane in that god forsaken place? Roier simply laughed in despair, firmly clutching the amaranths between his fingers and fighting the acute desire to just jump from the top of the Christ and end that absurd pain once and for all.

Not that it would do anything, since for some sadistic reason that he couldn't comprehend, no one but the children could really die in that place, but the feeling stood there, devouring both his mind and heart as tears flowed through his apathetic face and wet the paper of his Gatinho's letter of goodbye.

The day kept going as planned, and watching his parents in love while they had fun in the afternoon's family adventure only made the grip around Roier's heart get tighter in his chest. Obviously, he was very happy to have a family like the Brown De Luque, but the bitter feeling that he would never get to have what Vegetta and Foolish did was abundantly present, so much that in certain moments, Roier would take the picture that Cellbit had left him in that chest to stare at it with mournful eyes.

Seeing the smiles of Bobby and Cellbit in that photo was more than enough to invoke tears to the desolate Mexican's eyes, who, as always, tried to mask the pain when his adoptive parents asked if everything was okay. It was a special family day whose mood he didn't want to bring down due to his own problems.

But when loneliness came, and he saw himself unaccompanied in that giant castle built for a son no longer by his side, the man felt claustrophobic, and could only think of one person to talk to in a moment as painful as this one.

Someone who not only knew his pain very well, but who also shared it.

"But Roier, are you sure that it was the Federation who did something to him? I thought Cellbit worked for them…"

He heavily sighed, turning his head to Jaiden, whose worried expression reflected his.

"It wasn't like that, Jai. It was a plan, he wanted to infiltrate and find out how to destroy them from the inside."

"Oh," Jaiden covered her mouth, taken by surprise, "so he never…?"

Roier shook his head.

"It was dangerous, and he knew it, but he had to try. From what I know, the last drop was what happened to Bobby," he commented, only to watch Jaiden's expression turn downcast, "sorry."

"No, it's okay," she sighed, rubbing her arm, "that was very noble of him, but why didn't he tell anyone?"

"Too dangerous, I guess. He didn't even tell me what he was really doing, just explained fragments of the plan and asked for my trust."

"He was probably afraid that you'd get caught in the cross-fire if something happened."

"Yeah, probably," Roier looked forward, staring at the statue of Bobby in the castle's patio, where he and Jaiden decided to sit down to talk. "It worked, I think. It's been twenty-four hours since his disappearance, and neither the Federation nor Cucurucho have come up to me."

"Do you think he's alright?"

Roier eyed her, desolate.

"I don't know, Jai," he confessed, and his voice trembled, "I'm scared of finding out."

The smile that appeared on Jaiden's lips was as sad as her eyes.

"You like him, don't you?"

Roier immediately covered his face with his hands, trying to hide the red that tinted his cheeks.

"Am I that obvious?"

Jaiden weakly laughed.

"Not as much as him, I'd say. You're a rather interesting pair, and there's already gossip between the other islanders about how he looks at you as if you

carried the moon and the stars in your eyes."

Roier felt his heart rate pick up inside his chest and went back to staring at his friend, with an embarrassed expression.

"Ay, enserio?"

Jaiden nodded, finding this all entertaining.

"It's adorable, honestly. I'm surprised that you never noticed it."

"Um, I just didn't want to to be precipitated in assuming his feelings," Roier rubbed the back of his neck, timid, "Cellbo's an enigmatic man, I'm still learning to decipher the way he thinks."

Roier then remembered *why* he was talking to Jaiden, and shut his eyes when he felt the tears blur his vision.

"I mean, I *was* learning… Now, I'm not sure anymore."

"Roier," Jaiden held his hand, forcing him to look at her again, "if the Federation really found out about his plans and took him, then it means that there's a chance he's alive. You know how they work, and I'm sure Cellbit's a lot more useful to them alive than dead."

Roier let out a shaky exhale.

"You think so?"

Jaiden nodded.

"I have my reasons to know how they are, and despite Cucurucho being… misunderstood by most people, he's someone good. I'm sure he's okay, maybe just going through some punishment for insubordination."

"Hm, yeah, you have a point," Roier agreed, determined. "Which means that my Gatinho is somewhere on this island, just waiting to be rescued."

"I believe in that, and so," Jaiden gave him a light push with her shoulders, "what are you gonna do about it?"

The smile that appeared in the Mexican warrior's lips was full of splendor.

"Save my future boyfriend, what else?"

The battle was rough, but despite being rusty from the lack of use of his muscles for this kind of thing, Roier aced every obstacle put between him and Cellbit.

The Federation thought it appropriate to hide both him and his friend Felps extremely far from the center of the island, but that didn't stop Roier, who soon reached the localization of the coordinates alongside the rest and entered the cold caves in which the Federation prisoners were being kept. The presence of monsters didn't surprise Roier, seeing as he knew *very well* what that organization was capable of when it came keeping people away from their goals, and Roier was too focused in saving Cellbit to even think about anything that wasn't:

"GUAPITO!"

"GATIÑO, VOY POR TI!"

And anything, absolutely anything that dared standing between him and the Brazilian was completely decimated by the fighter's diamond sword.

Once he was able to guide Cellbit and Felps to freedom, all Roier could think of was to clear the rest of the path and not allow Cellbit to leave his field of view, which was ideal taking in consideration that Cellbit ended up getting lost in that maze of a place, and as much as he wanted to just stop everything and hug Cellbit with all his strength and relief, Roier kept his focus. They were still not away from danger, and he wouldn't rest until Cellbit was a hundred percent safe and reunited with his son once again.

The picture he always kept in his pocket was the perfect motivation to achieve that with excellence, and under only a few minutes, they were finally back to the center of the city, where he would eventually manage to bring Cellbit to a corner and talk to him about everything in his mind and heart.

Well, that was the plan, until Richarlyson gave the final blow by simply saying that he and his father were going to *get married.*

Por Díos, que?!

Roier looked at Cellbit in a panic, expecting to find an expression of

aversion or even disgust in his beautiful face, but was taken by surprise by the adorable redness that painted not only his cheeks, but also the tip of his nose, as he looked at Roier with hopeful eyes.

And that's when everything Roier thought he knew about life was completely turned on its head, as Cellbit proposed to him in the most silly and the most "them" way he could: with a simple donut offered by Richarlyson.

He wanted to cry, scream, run in circles, all at once, but was happy enough to just pull the investigator in and capture his lips in an intense and awkward kiss, which made everyone around them whistle in celebration. Cellbit happily kissed back, sighing against Roier's mouth and allowing the both of them to enter their own dream world that they would now be sharing, together.

And the next time Roier opened his eyes, he was face to face with Cellbit on his wedding day, both overflowing with excitement and joy as the priest united them in holy matrimony in front of everyone.

Roier smiled, and once the priest's final words were spoken, he happily took his husbands lips on his.

However, when Roier opened his eyes again, the scenery was much less joyful and inviting. He looked around, confused, knowing very well where he was once he noticed the Purgatory's red sky extending above his head and his feet making the boat's wood creak under him. Roier panted, running to the side of the ship and screaming for his husband's name in vain, but nothing replied. Richarlyson was dead, Jaiden was missing, and Cellbit was not in the ship, so when the bomb incinerated the entire island, all that Roier could do was scream in ache and despair, as once more he remained alive as his life crumbled around him.

The scenery changed once more when he opened his eyes, and the vision was even more alarming. The metal ceiling was the first thing he identified, and when his blurry vision started to clear, all he could see were the hateful smiles of both Doied and Osito, looming over his head with questionable intention. Roier tried to say something, beg for them to let him go, but all that could be heard from his mouth were grunts of pain, completely ignored by the scientists who injected sedatives into his veins, and everything started to black out one more time.

At that point, Roier no longer wanted to open his eyes. He had lost

everything, including himself, and he wasn't sure anymore if there was any going back. Maybe he should just let himself be taken by darkness, maybe that way, he could find Cellbit once again? Yeah, that was a good idea. The only idea that made any sense at the moment, and maybe he—

"…to… wake up…"

Hm? Roier frowned. This voice…

"… Guapito, it's a nightmare," the voice started echoing in his mind, clearly, this time. "Wake up!"

Roier breathed heavily, and when his eyes opened bursting with all the panic he'd been feeling the past minutes, all he found was the most beautiful blue immensity he'd ever had the pleasure of seeing in his whole life.

Cellbit's stunning eyes, looking at him with affliction.

"C-Cellbit…?"

"Damn, Guapito, you scared me," Cellbit sighed in relief, gently smiling and caressing the Mexican's humid cheek, "what the hell kind of nightmare was that? You nearly fell from the bed from all the tossing."

"Bed…?" Roier looked around, finding beige walls and the comforting environment of the room they both shared.

Suddenly, his mind was invaded by all the memories of what happened after Doied's antics. The rescue, the fight against the bears, *Watcher's* appearance, the escape by boat, and even the revelation of Esperanza who, alongside Richas and Pepito, became the core of the lives of those two young and loving parents.

He was okay, they were okay, and all the flurry that Roier had just witnessed was nothing but memories of distant times.

"Ay, gatiño," Roier sighed heavily, pulling Cellbit into a tight hug, *"me alegro tanto de verte."*

"Everything's okay, Ro," Cellbit assured, hugging him back and caressing his back, "you're with me, we're home, and the kids are sleeping in their respective rooms. Do you want to go check?"

"No, no, te creo" Roier reassured, leaving the hug and smiling to his

husband, *"gracias, te amo."*

Cellbit's smile was blinding. He took Roier's lips into a quick gentle kiss, and then pulled him back into his arms, allowing the man to rest his head on his chest as he stroked Roier's soft locks of hair.

"I love you too, my love. Now go to sleep, I'm here, and I'm never going anywhere without you again."

Roier nodded against Cellbit's chest, closing his eyes and feeling the peace and safety invade him as his husband whispered the song dedicated to them at their wedding.

I found a reason for me

To change who I used to be

A reason to start over new

And the reason is you

Roier smiled, and Cellbit's loving kiss on top of his head was the last thing he felt before being taken by dreams once again.

And this time, there were no nightmares.

The Reason is You

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bubuluwoo

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Blur

Amaiumi

Rainy-day-wizard

The Reason is You.

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